

**An Archaeological Survey of the  
Westwood Center Unit 11, Bexar County, Texas**

**by**

**Harry J. Shafer and Thomas R. Hester**

**Submitted to**

**Macina-Bose-Copeland and Associates, Inc.**

**Report 52  
Abasolo Archaeological Consultants  
San Antonio, Texas  
2007**

## ABSTRACT

An archaeological survey has been carried out at the location of the proposed Westwood Center Unit II, off Culebra Road in northwest Bexar County. The survey was done at the request of the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation Office and was conducted by Abasolo Archaeological Consultants of San Antonio on June 13, 2007. The tract covers about 22 acres and was once the locale of a ranch house and associated outbuildings. The house had been moved some years in the past and two small wooden barns or sheds remain. Additionally, archaeological site 41BX1613 had been previously recorded on the east side of Culebra Road, across from the survey area. The survey found that the site continues into the Westwood property, and additional information was obtained. Backhoe testing in terrace deposits on the property failed to yield any cultural evidence.

Neither the prehistoric remains at 41BX1613 or the two remaining sheds or barns have any research value. No further archaeological work is recommended.

## INTRODUCTION

Abasolo Archaeological Consultants conducted an archeological survey of the approximately 22 acres of the Westwood Center Unit II for Macina-Bose-Copeland and Associates, Inc. at the request of the City of San Antonio. The survey was completed on June 13, 2007 under the direction of Shafer. The property consists of five lots intended for commercial development and 10.4 acres of adjacent drainage easement. The assessment was carried out in accordance with the "Archeological Survey Standards for Texas." The standards call for the assessment of the significance of any prehistoric or historic sites that might be considered for nomination to National Register of Historic Places. The assessment consisted of a 100% pedestrian survey and backhoe testing in areas where potential was deemed high for buried cultural deposits. Since no public lands are directly impacted by the proposed development, a Texas Antiquities Permit was not required.

This report fulfills the terms of the contract between Abasolo Archaeological Consultants and Macina-Bose-Copeland and Associates, Inc. One archaeological site (41 BX1613) was found to extend onto the southwest portion of the property. Five backhoe trenches were excavated to test for buried archaeological deposits. All of the backhoe trenches yielded negative results for archaeological deposits. Formally a ranch house and outbuildings existed on the property but the house, reportedly built sometime in the 1950s was removed in the recent past. Two small wooden barns or sheds remain. Since 41BX1613 deposits on Westwood Center Unit II property consists of surface scatter of a small burned rock midden and no properties of historic significance are on the property, no further archaeological attention is recommended.

At the time of the survey the entire property was densely overgrown with annuals consisting mostly of grass and wild flowers (Figs. 2 and 3). This growth was almost waist high and so dense that walking was extremely laborious and the ground surface was simply not visible. Because of the dense vegetation cover and the likelihood that buried deposits could exist in the terraces, a series of backhoe trenches were excavated.

## Geology and Soils

The proposed Westwood II tract has significant topographic relief. The highest part of the property is in the southwest corner (Fig. 1) which is a consolidated gravel terrace (T3) of Culebra Creek. This consolidated gravel terrace was probably cut sometime in the Pleistocene and the valley filled with Late Pleistocene gravels and Holocene alluvial deposits from Culebra Creek. This complex geology is reflected in the soils. Parts of the tract are characterized by Lewisville Silty Clay soils, primarily the LvA series, a good soil for farming and on slopes of 0-1%. Profiles of the LvA soils indicate silty clays to depths of about two feet; below is a brown silty clay, and at the base, a bedrock consisting of deep beds of water-rounded limestone cobbles (Taylor et al. 1991:25). San Antonio Clay Loam (SaB) is also present on the tract, as is the Trinity series

(Tb), an alluvial soil on low terraces (for example, T2 described later) and bottomland (Taylor et al. 1991:31). On the hilltop at the Westwood II tract are Brackett-Austin Complex soils, a clay loam typical of knolls and narrow ridges in this part of Bexar County (Taylor et al. 1991:12).

## **Archaeological Background**

Over 1,600 archaeological sites have been recorded in Bexar County. Nickels, et al. (2001) provides a good overview of the regional archaeology, and Shafer and Hester (2005a, 2005b,) and Hester and Shafer (2005) summarize local archaeology along Culebra Creek. No detailed overview will be presented here, but a brief summary is provided to frame the context of the investigation.

Human occupation at Bexar County sites span 11,500 years, from the late Ice Age into the Historic era. The local archaeological chronology extends the entire spectrum of human occupation in the greater San Antonio area, including the three major periods of Native American prehistory: Paleoindian, Archaic, and Late Prehistoric. The area also has a rich Spanish Colonial and Anglo/Hispanic heritage.

The Culebra Creek valley has a well documented prehistoric record extending back to at least 10,000 years. The Texas Archeological Site Atlas shows that three archaeological sites, 41BX708, 711, and 712 are located upstream on the south side of the creek approximately 1.5 kilometers west of FM 1560. Site 41BX708, which was recently partially excavated, contained an archaeological record extending from early Historic Period times back to about 10,000 years ago. Prehistoric sites 41BX1422, 1423, and 1424 are located downstream between FM 1560 and Loop 1604. Excavations at site 41BX 126, located east of the project area where Loop 1604 crosses Culebra Creek, indicated that it was extensively occupied from about 2,000 to 5,000 years ago.

Examples of investigated archaeological sites in this part of Bexar County cover the spectrum of Native American chronology. The earliest Paleoindian site thus far investigated is Pavo Real (41BX52) located at the Highway 1604 crossing of Leon Creek. This site yielded a substantial Clovis Period (11,500-10,800 years ago) occupation overlain by a Folsom Period (10,800-10,300 years ago) encampment (Collins et al., 2004).

Recent investigations at the Chandler Site, 41BX708, by the Southern Texas Archaeological Association's Field School on Culebra Creek, upstream from the current project, identified a Late Paleoindian component that dates approximately 9,000-10,000 years ago (McKenzie and Moses 2005). Early and Middle Archaic, and Late Prehistoric components also are present at the Chandler Site.

One of the most extensive investigations of a Middle Archaic site is 41BX126 at the juncture of Culebra Creek and Highway 1604 (Nickels et al., 2000). Not only did this study yield important information about Middle and Late Archaic components, but it also

added significant knowledge to the formation processes for burned rock middens, one of the most common types of archaeological sites found in the San Antonio area.

Late Prehistoric components have been recognized at the Chandler Site (41BX708; McKenzie and Moses 2005). A possible Historic Indian occupation (post-1700) is also thought to have been present at that site.

## Survey Results

Field work consisted of a pedestrian survey, partly hampered by dense wildflowers (Figs. 2, 3) and undergrowth. For that reason, and because Culebra Creek has a high density of prehistoric archaeological sites along its course, backhoe testing was necessary (Fig. 4).

One archaeological Site, 41BX1613 (described below) had been previously recorded south of Culebra Road. The surface scatter for this site extends to the top of the high terrace on the Westwood property (Fig. 1). A surface scatter of fire-cracked limestone provided evidence that a small burned rock midden is present along with a thin scatter of chipped stone artifacts. This thin cultural deposit has eroded down slope on to the T2 surface.

The T2 terrace consists of deep leached soils and a gravel deposit that extends northeast near the northeast corner of the property. The T2 terrace was cut and filled with more recent Holocene alluvium. While backhoe testing showed both the T2 terrace and the T1 terrace to consist of deep soils over 1.5 meters deep, no cultural material was found in any of the subsurface tests. A description of each backhoe trench is provided below, and the locations are shown in Figure 1.

### **Backhoe Testing**

*BHT#1* (Fig. 5). The first trench was placed on the lower terrace (T1) near the northwest corner of the fallow field. This trench was 3 meters long and 1.4 meters deep at which point the test was terminated. The soil was a very dark grayish brown clay loam (10YR3/2 Munsell) from top to bottom with no perceptible change in soil color or texture. No rocks of any kind were seen. This deep soil consists of old channel fill from Culebra Creek probably dating prior to the development of the tributary that now separates the field from Culebra Creek.

*BHT#2* (Fig. 6). This trench was placed south of *BHT#1* on the slope toward the base of the hill. The placement was chosen to test the deposits in the T2 terrace which possibly might have a better chance of containing archaeological deposits. The trench was 3 m. long and 1.15 m deep. The soils in this test were considerably different than anticipated. The profile can be described as follows:

Soils 0-40 cm below surface consisted very dark gray-brown sandy clay loam (less clay than in BHT#1). No cultural material was evident; some historic trash from the farm house that once stood on the hill top extended down to the area of the test.

At 40-50, a transition to light yellowish-brown clay loam with a slight admixture of gravel and *Rabdotus* shells was observed.

At 50-1.15 m, the soils became a light yellowish brown clay loam with a slight admixture of *Rabdotus* snail shells. No cultural material was present.

*BHT#3* (Fig. 7). A slight ridge was noticed in the field that extended from the base of the hill (T3) to near the northeast corner of the property. The surface sloped northward and southeastward from this ridge. *BHT#3* was placed near the end of this ridge thinking perhaps that older deposits were preserved here. The upper most portion of the soil was the dark gray brown clay loam seen in *BHT#1*, but at about 30 cm there was a transition to a lighter clay loam to 35 cm. At 35 cm, the bucket hit a consolidated gravel deposit. It was clearly bedrock so we terminated the trench at that point. Again, no cultural material was present.

*BHT#4* (Fig. 8). This trench was to test the southeast corner of the field west of the north-south tributary that forms the eastern boundary. This trench was 1.2 m deep and 3 meters long. The top soil was the dark gray-brown clay loam (10YR3/2) that extended throughout the deposits. The soil contained more clay here than in any of the other tests. This also appears to be channel fill. No cultural material was present.

*BHT#5* (Fig. 9). *BHT#5* was placed on the slope west of *BHT#4*, between it and the base of the hill. It too was on the slope of the T2 terrace. Burned rock and a few scattered lithics occur on the hilltop and the possibility existed that buried deposits would occur at the base of the hill. This trench was ca. 1 meter deep and 3 meters long. The profile is described as follows:

At 0-50 cm the soil was a grayish brown clay loam (10YR4/2).

At 50-60 cm a transition occurred to light brown with some gravel admixture.

At 60-100 cm the soils became yellowish brown (10YR5/4) with gravel admixture that got more dense 80-100 cm. No cultural material anywhere in the profile.

### **41BX1613**

A thin scatter of fire-cracked rock that is usually indicative of a burned rock midden occurs on the hilltop along with a few chipped stone items. Visibility is very poor here and our efforts to scrape the vegetation to expose more midden failed to yield definitive results. The subsoil here is a very dense consolidated gravel formation,

probably the source of gravels in BHT 2 and 5. This cultural material on the hill top is undoubtedly an extension of site 41BX1613 that was recorded in 2005 by David Calame, Sr. Site 41BX1613 was a surface scatter reported to have been a possible quarry site. The chert-rich surface deposits were undoubtedly used by the prehistoric inhabitants, but the central feature of the site may have been the small eroded burned rock midden that is on the Westwood Unit II property. This burned rock deposit lies on a much consolidated gravel terrace and has no integrity with regards to buried deposits. No further work is recommended.

### **Historic Structures**

A farm house, cistern, and outbuildings once stood on the hill top overlooking the fallow field. The house was removed in the recent past and no description of this structure is available. Two small wooden outbuildings were noted at the time of the survey. These structures were used within the last 50 years and are not considered to be historically significant.

### **Recommendations**

The pedestrian survey identified traces of a prehistoric site and two small barns or sheds. The prehistoric site is an extension of site 41BX1613 recorded across Culebra Road from the property. The barns or sheds are all that remain of a farmstead that once stood on the property. Neither the prehistoric remains at 41BX1613 or the two remaining sheds or barns have any research value. No further archaeological work is recommended.

### **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, and Archeological Studies Program, Report 50. Environmental Division, Texas Department of Transportation, Austin..
- Hester, T. R. and H. J. Shafer  
 2005 *An Archaeological Assessment of the Proposed Kyle Seale Offsite Sewer Line, Bexar County, Texas*. Report 21. Abasolo Archaeological Consultants, San Antonio.
- McKenzie, C. and B. Moses  
 2005 Preliminary Results of the 2005 Field School. Paper presented at the September Quarterly Meeting of the Southern Texas Archaeological Association, San Antonio.
- Nickels, D. L., C. B. Bousman, J. D. Leach, and D. A. Cargill

- 2000 *Test Excavations at the Culebra Creek Site, 41BX126, Bexar County, Texas.* Archaeological Survey Report 265, at San Antonio, and Archeological Studies Program, Report 3, Environmental Affairs Division, Texas Department of Transportation. Austin.
- Shafer, H. J. and T. R. Hester
- 2005a *Archaeological Survey of the Wildhorse Vista Subdivision, Bexar County, Texas.* Report 8. Abasolo Archaeological Consultants, San Antonio.
- 2005b *Archaeological Survey of the Remuda Ranch Offsite Sanitary Sewer Main.* Report 12. Abasolo Archaeological Consultants, San Antonio.
- Taylor, F. B., R. B. Hailey, and D. L. Richmond
- 1991 *Soil Survey of Bexar County.* United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Series 1962, No. 12. Washington, D.C.

Figures

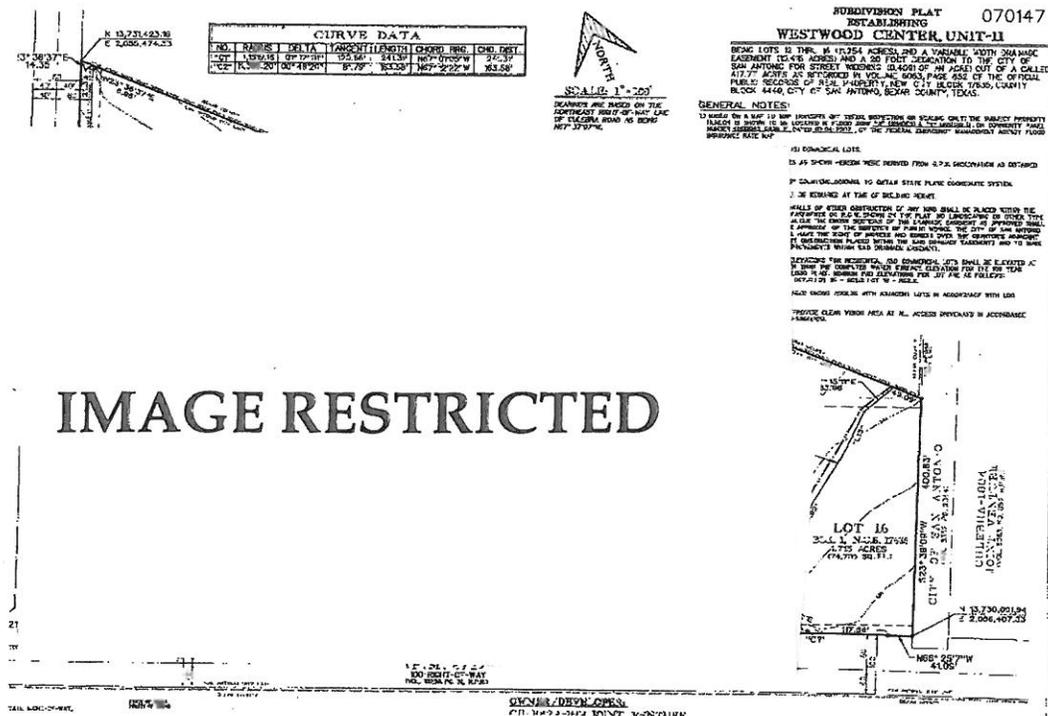


IMAGE RESTRICTED

Figure 1. Plat map of Westwood Center Unit II showing the location of 41BX1613 and backhoe trenches excavated during the course of the archaeological investigations. Map provided by Macina-Bose-Copeland and Associates, Inc.



**Figure 2. View of the property looking east from Backhoe Trench #1 showing the dense growth of wildflowers.**



**Figure 3. View of the higher terrace and dense growth of wildflowers. The two barns or sheds can be seen in the background.**



**Figure 8. Backhoe Trench #4 showing the dense dark gray-brown clay channel fill.**



**Figure 9. Backhoe Trench #5. Note the soils are similar to BHT#2 which also tested the second terrace (T2) deposits. More gravel was mixed with the soils in BHT#5 from erosion of the dense gravel outcropping on the T3 terrace to the west.**