

**An Intensive Cultural Resources Survey
of the 8.5-Acre Mirabella Site,
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas**

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I. ABSTRACT

An intensive cultural resources survey performed in December 2008 resulted entirely in negative findings. No sites were recorded as a result of the survey.

II. MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

In November 2008 **Raba-Kistner Consultants (R-K)**, under contract to The NRP Group LLC, performed an intensive cultural resources survey on the 8.5-acre Mirabella site, located on Bandera Road and W. Broadview Drive in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The NRP Group LLC proposes to construct a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) subdivision and the archeological survey was performed to ensure compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended.

The results of the desktop assessment indicated that no archeological sites, including any listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or designated as State Archeological Landmarks (SAL) occur within or immediately adjacent to the project area. No cultural resource surveys have been performed within the boundaries of the Mirabella site (Atlas 2008).

The intensive survey of the project area consisted of a 100 percent pedestrian survey supplemented with shovel testing. No cultural materials, artifacts, or features were identified on the ground surface or in any of the shovel tests.

Based on the paucity of observed cultural materials, it is unlikely that any significant cultural resources will be impacted by the proposed project. No additional work is recommended. **R-K** recommends that the NRP Group LLC proceed with construction activities as planned.

III. INTRODUCTION

The NRP Group LLC proposes to construct a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) subdivision in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. In November 2008, **Raba-Kistner Consultants, Inc. (R-K)** contracted with The NRP Group LLC to perform an intensive cultural resources survey on the 8.5-acre Mirabella site. The property is located on Bandera Road and W. Broadview Drive in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

The purpose of the investigation was to determine whether archeological sites are located within the project area, and if sites are present, determine their potential eligibility for designation as a State Archeological Landmark (SAL) or for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Since the project involves HUD-assistance, a field investigation was recommended to ensure compliance with 36 CFR Part 800 of Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended.

The results of the desktop assessment indicated that no archeological sites, including any listed in the NRHP or designated as SALs, occur within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Two archeological surveys have also been performed within the vicinity of the project area, but no cultural resource surveys have been performed within project area (THC 2008).

The cultural resources investigation consisted of an archival background review, a 100 percent pedestrian survey of the project area supplemented with shovel testing, and a report suitable for review in accordance with the THC Rules of Practice and Procedure, Chapter 26, Section 27, and the Council of Texas Archeologists' (CTA) Guidelines for Cultural Resources Management Reports. Pollyanna Held, Principal Investigator and Chris Murray, archaeologist, performed the intensive survey on December 9 and 10, 2008. The survey entailed surface inspection, as well as shovel testing within the boundary of the proposed HUD development location.

A total of 17 shovel tests were excavated within the Area-of-Potential-Effects (APE) which was defined of the 8.5-acre tract. The Texas State Minimum Archeological Survey Standards require a minimum of two shovel tests per acre for projects measuring between three and 10 acres in size. When assessed in regard to overall acreage, a total of 17 shovel tests were required for the 8.5 total acres and **R-K** met the minimum survey standards by excavating 17 shovel tests.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A. Project Area Setting

A map of the project area plotted on the *San Antonio West, Texas* (2998-133) 7.5-minute United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangle is presented as **Figure 1** and a map of the project area plotted on the 2007 aerial photograph is presented as **Figure 2**.

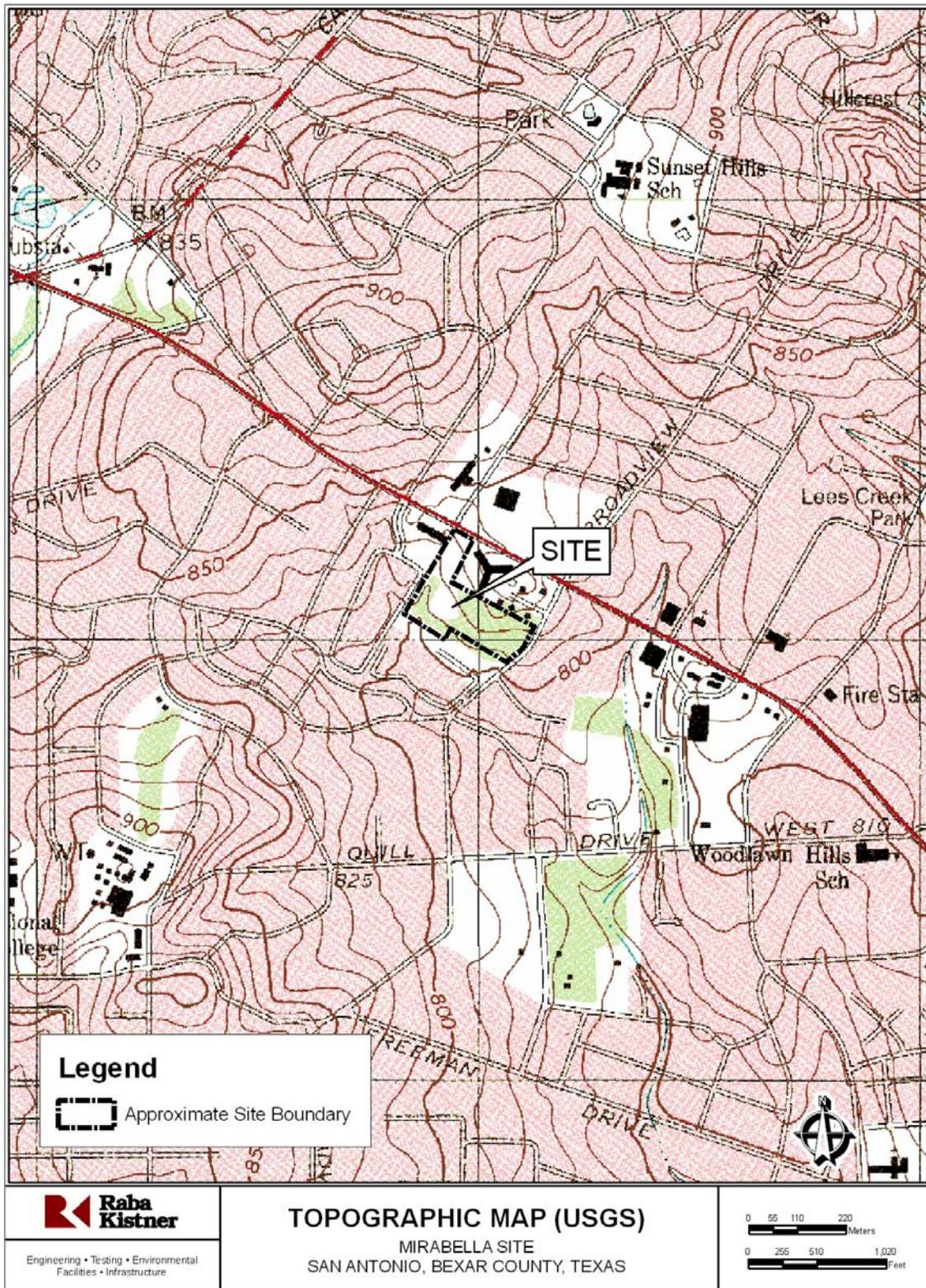


Figure 1. Map of project area plotted on the topographic map

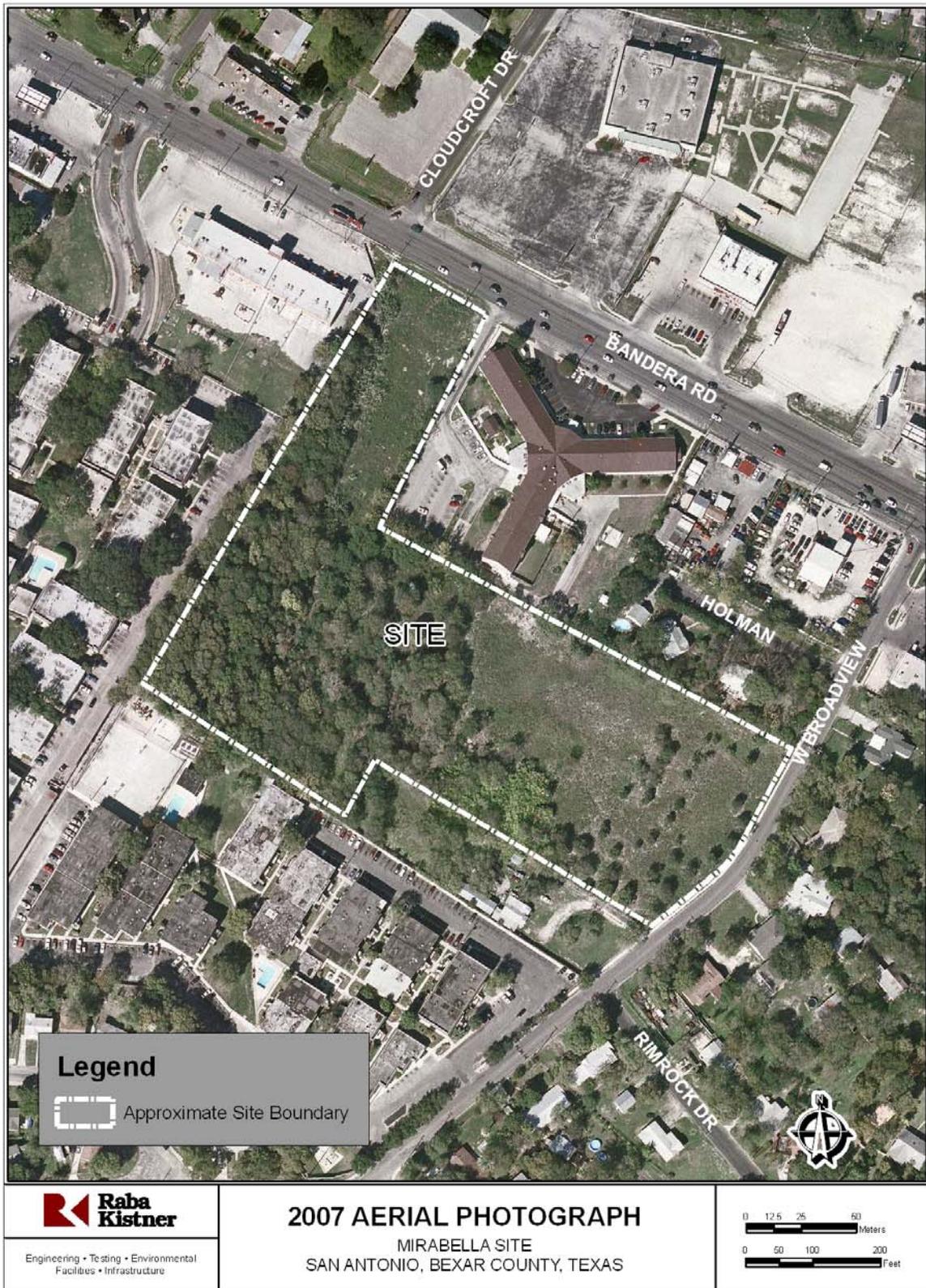


Figure 2. Map of project area plotted on the 2007 aerial photograph

The majority of the ground surface at the Mirabella project area was disturbed. Almost half of the 8.5-acres contains offsite construction fill. The eastern portion of the project area, consisting of approximately two acres, and the creek bed were observed to be intact and not previously disturbed. There is modern debris and trash strewn throughout the entire project area. Photographs of the project area are presented in **Figure 3** through **Figure 6**.



Figure 3. View of undisturbed northeast corner of the project area, facing south



Figure 4. View from the northern edge of the project area, facing south.



Figure 5. View from the southwest corner of the project area, facing north



Figure 6. View of fill material on eastern clearing, facing north

B. Flora and Fauna

The project area lies in the Blackland Prairie vegetative region, as defined by Gould (1975). Blacklands were expansive, virtually open grasslands along with areas of scattered trees and shrubs or mottes of woody vegetation. Common plants of the area are various species of Oak (*Quercus* sp.), Ash Juniper (*Juniperous ashi*), Hackberry (*Cletis laevigata*), Honey Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*), Poison oak (*Rhus toxicodendron*), and a mix of native and introduced grasses.

The project area is located within the Balconian Biotic Provinces of Texas (Blair 1950). The Balconian Province only exists in central Texas and is contained within the Edwards Plateau geographic province (Neck 1986). Some of the common mammals within the area include nine-

banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), eastern cottontail rabbits (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), opossum (*Didelphis virginianus*) raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), and white footed mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*). Blair (1950) lists at least 75 species of reptiles and amphibians found within the Balconian Biotic Province. Also, the bird species composition in the project area is fairly diverse with numerous breeding, migrant, and wintering species present (Smith and Beuchner 1947). According to the study of aerial photographs, the project area is surrounded by urban development. Therefore it is most likely that not all the animals listed above will be found within or near the project area.

C. Geology and Soils

According to the *Geologic Atlas of Texas*, San Antonio Sheet, the project area falls within the Pecan Gap Chalk (Kpg) Formation. This consists of chalk and chalky marl which becomes more calcareous as you go westward in the state. Kpg tends to be a very light yellow to yellowish brown color that weathers to form moderately deep soil which is seldom exposed (Bureau of Economic Geography 1983).

There are two different soils associated with this project area. Along the western corner of the project area, there is a small sliver of soils that make up four percent of the total acreage. This soil type is an Austin Silty Clay (AuC). The surface layer is about 16 inches thick and the subsurface layer is about 14 inches thick. The surface layer is a dark grayish-brown and is more clayey than is typical for this soil type. The AuC is associated with sloping soils of three to five percent. The rest of the project area is made up of the Brackett-Austin complex (BsC). These soils can be shallow to moderately deep, and are easy to dig into with an auger. The Brackett soils in this complex are similar to Brackett clay loam and the Austin soils are similar to the Austin series of soils, but the surface soils are a lighter color than those found in the Austin series. The BsC developed over chalk (Taylor et al. 1962: General Soils Map)

V. METHODS

A. Archival Research Methods

Background research included accessing the THC's online Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (Atlas) as well as a review of survey reports, site files, and maps on file at the THC and TARL (THC 2008). These resources were examined in order to identify any previously recorded sites and past investigations within the vicinity of the project area. The aerial photo, USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle, geologic map, and soil survey map were also examined prior to the field investigation. These supplemented the background research and helped provide information on topography, soils, vegetation, geology, the local environment, and levels of development within the vicinity of the project area.

B. Field Methods

The intensive survey of the APE consisted of a 100 percent pedestrian survey of the project's APE supplemented with shovel testing. The project's APE was documented. All work was performed in compliance with THC and CTA survey standards for the overall project area unless documented field conditions warranted otherwise.

Newly discovered prehistoric and historic archeological sites were defined in compliance with THC/CTA survey standards and policies including requirements for assessing historical sites and cemeteries.

Archeologists from **R-K** conducted a 100 percent pedestrian survey of the project area supplemented with shovel testing. Shovel testing was limited to areas with low (less than 30 percent) ground surface visibility and to high-probability areas, such as undisturbed areas with poor surface visibility. Shovel tests were excavated in accordance with THC and CTA survey guidelines and excavated soils were screened through ¼-inch wire-mesh screens. The geographic coordinates of each shovel test were recorded using a handheld Global Positioning System (GPS). Upon completion, the shovel tests were backfilled.

The Texas State Minimum Archeological Survey Standards require a minimum of two shovel tests each acre for projects measuring between three and 10 acres. A total of 17 shovel tests were required for 8.5 total acres to meet the survey standards; **R-K** excavated a total of 17 shovel tests and met the survey standard.

Field notes were maintained on terrain, vegetation, soils, land forms, shovel tests, and cultural material observed (if any). Standardized shovel test forms were completed for every shovel test. These forms included location data, depth, soil type, and notations on any artifacts encountered. Digital photographs with a photo log were also completed as appropriate. The locations of all shovel tests were recorded via handheld GPS units utilizing the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinate system and the North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) map datum. Shovel test data are presented in **Appendix A**.

This survey set out to employ a non-collection policy for cultural materials. Non-diagnostic artifacts (e.g., lithic debitage, burned rock, historic glass) were described, sketched, and/or photo-documented in the field and replaced in the same location in which they were found. In the event that any diagnostic artifacts (e.g., projectile points, ceramics, marked historic materials) were identified in the field, they were to be collected and placed in plastic bags

labeled with relevant provenience information. Non-diagnostic artifacts were photo-documented in the field. Since no diagnostic artifacts were encountered in the survey, the proposed collection policy was not brought into play.

VI. RESULTS

A. Results of Archival Research

The results of the background research determined that no prehistoric or historic archaeological sites have been previously recorded within the project area. However, the project area had not been previously surveyed for cultural resources. No sites, including any listed in the NRHP or designated as SALs occur within or immediately adjacent to the project area (THC 2008).

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) performed a linear survey 1,325 meters west of the project area in 1984 and recorded no sites as a result of the investigation. In 2006 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) contracted with UTSA's Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) to perform an area survey along Callaghan Road. No sites were recorded as a result of that investigation (THC 2008).

B. Survey Results

The intensive cultural resources survey entailed a 100 percent pedestrian survey of the APE supplemented with shovel testing. Ground surface visibility ranged from zero to 25 percent; a shovel test was placed in areas with poor ground surface visibility. Surface visibility was relatively poor in the majority of the project area consisting of grassy, pastureland. The wooded creek bed also had poor ground visibility due to the layer of fallen leaves. Ground surface visibility was fair to poor in undisturbed portions of project area located at eastern portion of the L-shaped tract.

The highest probability area for potential intact deposits was located on the elevated land next to the dry creek; however, these areas were disturbed and had been covered with offsite construction fill. The fill was deeper than 60 centimeters below the surface (cmbs).

A total of 17 shovel tests were excavated across the project area. A map of the shovel tests is presented in **Figure 7**.

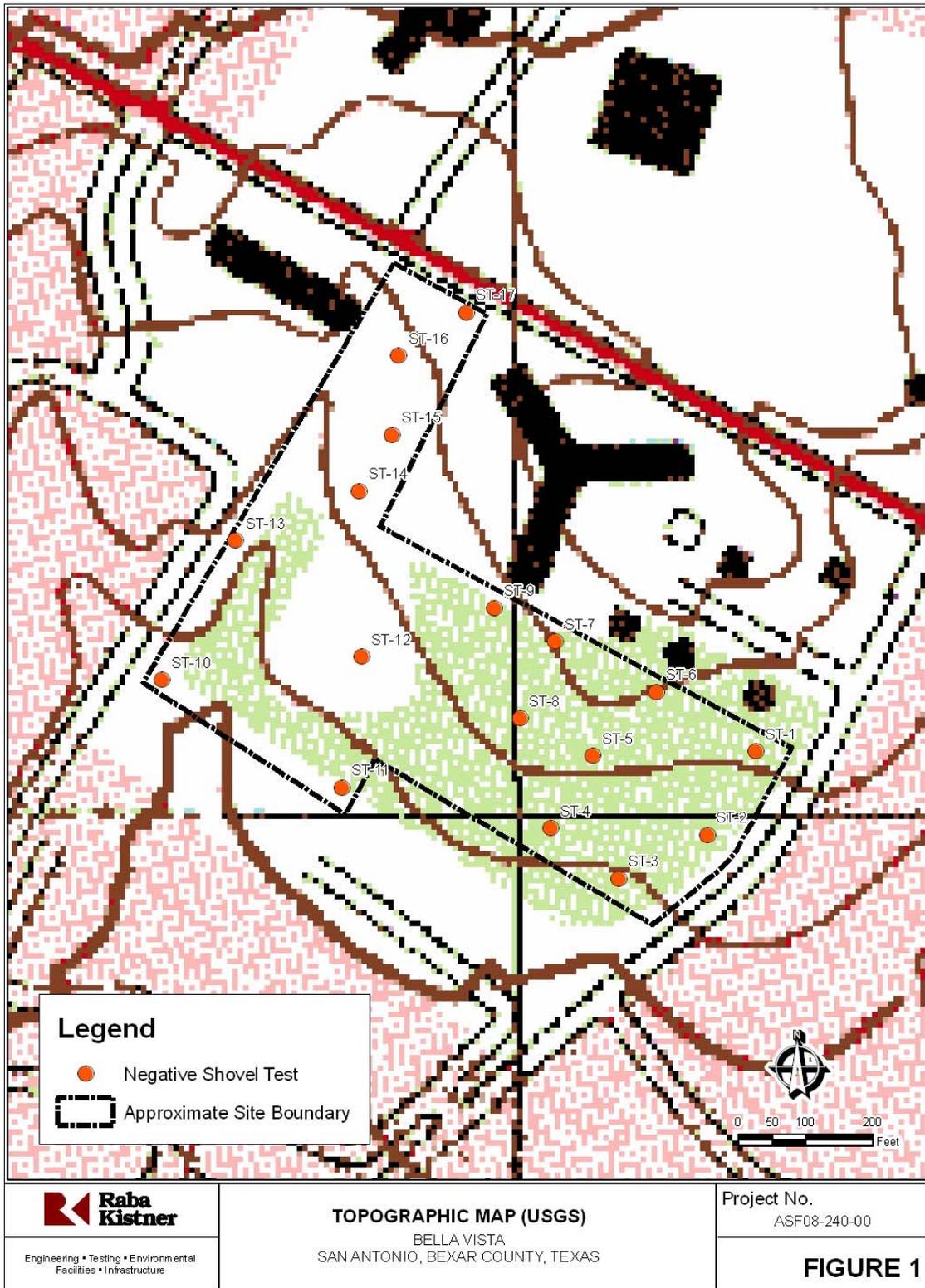


Figure 7. Map of shovel test locations plotted on the topographic map

A total of 3.67 acres of the 8.5-acre project area was comprised of fill. Shovel Tests 2, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, and 17 were entirely in fill. Shovel Tests 10, 11, and 13 consisted of a mix of alluvium and fill wash out from run off. Therefore, ten of the seventeen shovel tests did not contain original deposits. **Figure 8** shows the amount of fill and fill piles within the project area. A photo of Shovel Test 8 showing the fill soil is presented in **Figure 9**.

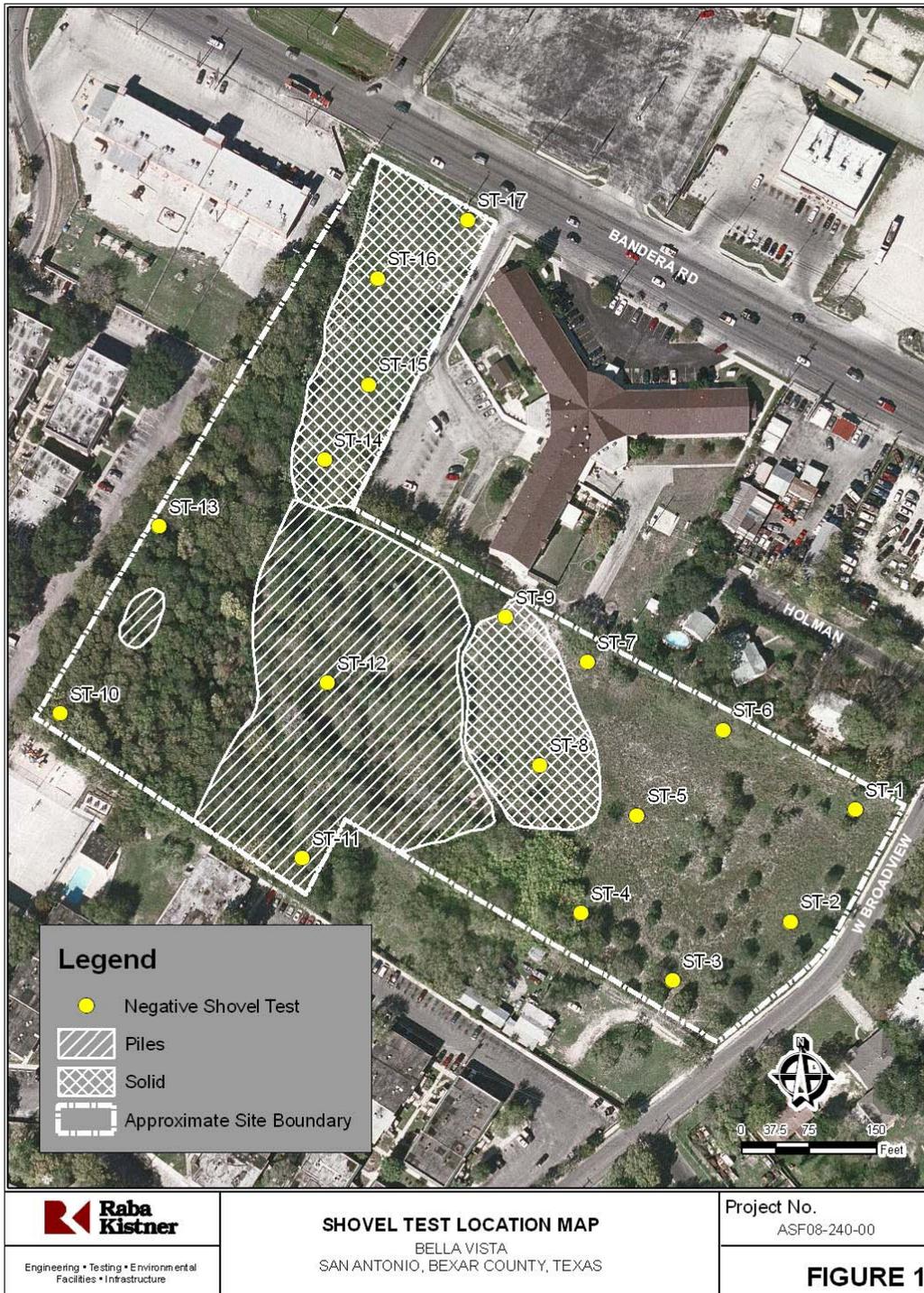


Figure 8. Map of shovel test locations plotted on the 2007 aerial photo with fill locations



Figure 9. View of the negative Shovel Test 8 excavated in the construction fill

The survey resulted entirely in negative findings. No cultural materials, artifacts, or features were identified on the ground surface or in any of the shovel tests. Shovel Test Data is included in **Appendix A**.

VII. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In November 2008, **R-K** under contract to The NRP Group LLC, performed an intensive cultural resources survey on the 8.5-acre Mirabella site, located on Bandera Road and W. Broadview Drive in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The archeological survey was conducted to comply with Section 106 of NHPA.

The archival background review determined that no cultural resource surveys have been previously performed within the project area. No sites, including any listed in the NRHP or designated as SALs occur within or immediately adjacent to Mirabella project area (THC 2008).

The intensive survey of the project area included a 100 percent pedestrian survey of the APE supplemented with shovel testing. No cultural materials, artifacts, or features were identified on the ground surface or in any of the shovel tests. The survey revealed that almost half of the project area had been previously disturbed by dumping of fill material.

Based on the lack of cultural materials, it is unlikely that any significant cultural resources will be impacted by the proposed HUD project. No additional archeological work is recommended. **R-K** recommends that proposed construction at the Mirabella site proceed as planned.

In the unlikely event that cultural materials are encountered during construction, all work should cease at the location of the findings, and an Archeologist at the THC-Archeology Division should be contacted. In such a case, work will not commence until authorized by the required agencies.

VIII. REFERENCES CITED

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APPENDIX A
SHOVEL TEST DATA

ST#	GPS Pt	Easting	Northing	Depth (cmbs)	Soils	Artifacts	Additional Information
1	14	541082	3260229	0-10	Grey loamy clay	Negative	Hard compact soils. Rabdotus shells, naturally occurring chert shatter, and thermally altered chert were found.
				10-20	Grey loamy clay	Negative	Naturally occurring chert shatter
				20-30	Grey loamy clay	Negative	Naturally occurring chert shatter
				30-40	Grey loamy gravelly clay	Negative	Naturally occurring chert shatter
				40-50	Grey loamy rocky clay	Negative	Naturally occurring chert shatter
				50-60	Grey loamy rocky clay	Negative	Naturally occurring chert shatter and Rabdotus were found. Small cobbles that are 6cm long were found. Terminated ST due to depth and lack of artifacts.
2	15	541060	3260191	0-10	Light grey/whitish chalky gravelly silty clay	Negative	Modern brick fragment and modern brown glass fragments were found.
				10-20	Light grey/whitish chalky gravelly silty clay	Negative	White sterile soil, very rocky. Possibly degraded limestone or fill.
				20-30	Light grey/whitish chalky gravelly silty clay	Negative	Terminated ST due to soil type and lack of artifacts.
3	16	541020	3260171	0-10	Greyish black loamy clay	Negative	Hard and clumpy soils. Rabdotus shells, modern asbestos, and linolium tile fragments were found.
				10-20	Greyish black loamy clay	Negative	Rabdotus shells and modern glass fragments were found.
				20-30	Greyish black loamy clay	Negative	Rabdotus shells were found.
				30-40	Light grey silty rocky clay	Negative	Soil has 10 cm plus sized rocks in this level.
				40-50	Light grey silty rocky clay	Negative	Tree roots were hit at this level. Also, found thermally altered chert with pot lid fractures. Terminated ST at 50 cm due to limestone.
4	17	540989	3260194	0-10	Dark Black dry clumpy clay	Negative	Thermally altered chert was found
				10-20	Dark Black dry clumpy clay	Negative	Modern Glass fragments, Rabdotus shell, and thermally altered chert were found
				20-30	Dark Black dry clumpy clay	Negative	Modern Glass fragments, thermally altered chert, and two 10cm cobbles were found
				30-40	Dark Black dry clumpy clay	Negative	Naturally shattered chert fragments, Rabdotus shell, and thermally altered chert were found
				40-50	Dark Black dry clumpy clay	Negative	Terminated ST due to lack of artifacts.
5	18	541008	3260227	0-10	Grey silty hard gravelly clay	Negative	Thermally altered chert and rabdotus shells were found
				10-20	Grey silty hard gravelly clay	Negative	15cm and smaller low grade chert nodules were found.
				20-27	Grey silty hard gravelly clay	Negative	6cm to 15 cm cobbles. Terminated due to bedrock.
6	13	541037	3260244	0-10	Dark grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	6cm cobbles and naturally occurring shattered chert fragments.

ST#	GPS Pt	Easting	Northing	Depth (cmbs)	Soils	Artifacts	Additional Information
				10-17	Dark grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	6cm-10cm cobbles and naturally occurring shattered chert fragments. Terminated St due to bedrock.
7	10	540991	3260274	0-10	Greyish brown loamy clay	Negative	Thermally altered chert.
				10-20	Greyish brown loamy clay	Negative	Rabdotus and 5cm-8cm cobbles found.
				20-30	Brown loamy clay	Negative	Naturally occurring shattered chert.
				30-40	Greyish brown loamy clay	Negative	
				40-50	Greyish brown loamy clay	Negative	
				50-55	Greyish brown loamy clay	Negative	Soil becomes hard and compact at 55cm. Terminated ST due to lack of artifacts and difficulty digging.
8	12	540975	3260244	0-50	White limestoney gravelly soil	Negative	Naturally occurring shattered chert and rabdotus shells were found.
				50-60	White limestoney gravelly soil	Negative	Soil has become slightly darker. Modern brick fragment found at 55cm below surface.
				60-62	White limestoney gravelly soil	Negative	Terminated ST due to only is digging in construction fill.
9	11	540962	3260295	0-10	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	Modern Glass Fragments, degraded plastic grocery bag fragments, and naturally occurring shattered chert were found.
				10-20	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	12cm cobbles and naturally occurring shattered chert were found.
				20-30	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	Naturally occurring shattered chert was found.
				30-40	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	Modern glass fragments, wood, and naturally occurring shattered chert were found.
				40-50	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	Decomposing woody roots and naturally occurring shattered chert were found.
				50-61	Light grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	Soil is less gravelly than the levels above it. Terminated ST due to lack of artifacts and depth.
10	5	540805	3260266	0-16	Dark brown silt loamy clay	Negative	
				16-20	Grey silty clay	Negative	
				20-40	Grey silty clay with limestone gravel	Negative	
				40-50	Black gravelly clay	Negative	Soil is hard and compact.
				50-60	Black gravelly clay	Negative	Soil is hard and compact. Naturally occurring shattered chert was found.
				60-64	Brownish grey black gravelly clay	Negative	Soil is hard and compact. Fragments of a rusted out can were found. Terminated ST due to depth and lack of artifacts.
11	6	540891	3260220	0-10	Brown loamy clay	Negative	Rabdotus was found.
				10-20	Greyish brown loamy clay	Negative	
				20-30	Brownish grey silty clay	Negative	Naturally occurring shattered chert, and rabdotus was found.

ST#	GPS Pt	Easting	Northing	Depth (cmbs)	Soils	Artifacts	Additional Information
				30-61	Brownish grey silty clay	Negative	Rabdotus was found. Terminated ST due to depth and lack of artifacts.
12	7	540903	3260272	0-7	Rich brown loam	Negative	
				7-35	Whitish tan caliche	Negative	Hard, compact, and powdery. ST was dug at the lowest point between a group of fill piles. Terminated ST due to caliche.
13	8	540909	320358	0-10	Brown loamy clay	Negative	Modern glass and rabdotus were found.
				10-20	Greyish brown loamy clay	Negative	Rabdotus and naturally occurring shattered chert were found.
				20-30	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	
				30-40	Dark brown clay	Negative	
				40-46	Dark brown clay	Negative	Small cobbles were found. Terminated ST due to caliche or decomposed limestone.
14	9	540909	3260358	0-10	Greyish brown loamy gravelly clay	Negative	Small animal bone, river gravel, and naturally occurring shattered chert.
				10-20	Greyish brown silty gravelly clay	Negative	River gravel was found.
				20-30	Greyish brown silty gravelly clay	Negative	River gravel and asphalt chunks were found.
				30-40	Greyish brown silty gravelly clay	Negative	Rough gravel and asphalt chunks were found.
				40-60	Greyish brown silty gravelly clay	Negative	Rough gravel and asphalt chunks were found. This entire ST was disturbed fill. Terminated ST due to depth and lack of artifacts.
15	19	540917	3260373	0-10	Grey rocky loamy clay	Negative	Asphalt chunks, river gravel, and naturally occurring shattered chert. Soil is very hard and compact.
				10-20	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	River gravel was found.
				20-30	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	Asphalt chunks were found.
				30-40	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	Rough gravel and asphalt chunks were found.
				40-60	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	Rough gravel and asphalt chunks were found. This entire ST was disturbed fill. Terminated ST due to depth and lack of artifacts.
16	20	540920	3260409	0-10	Grey rocky loamy clay	Negative	Asphalt chunks, 5cm-15cm cobbles, and naturally occurring shattered chert. Soil is very hard and compact.
				10-20	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	Asphalt and small cobbles were found.
				20-30	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	Asphalt chunks were found.
				30-40	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	
				40-60	Grey silty gravelly clay	Negative	This entire ST was disturbed fill. Terminated ST due to depth and lack of artifacts.
17	22	540945	3260427	0-22	Red/orange sand	Negative	Asphalt chunks and some small gravel were found. Terminated ST due to hitting solid limestone.