Intensive Archaeological Survey of Proposed Marbach Road Development, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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Prepared for KB Home
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Abstract

An intensive archaeological survey was conducted on the dates of January 7-8 and 21, 2015, and on February 4, 2015 by Pape-Dawson archaeologists for the KB Homes, Inc.-sponsored Marbach Road Land Development project located in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The project area is located in west San Antonio, on an undeveloped parcel south of Marbach Road between Loop 410 and Loop 1604. The archaeological project area (also known as the Area of Potential Effects [APE]) was defined as the footprint of the 80.9-acre (78.4 hectare) parcel proposed to undergo residential development. The proposed parcel is bound by Marbach Road to the north, a commercial storage facility to the west, Medio Creek to the south, and by an undeveloped parcel to the east. A transmission line runs east-west through the middle of the project APE. Since the specific types of improvements associated with this development have yet to be determined, the maximum depth of vertical impact is presently unknown. Since this project will require a permit in association with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act will be necessary. In addition, this project is located on land within the San Antonio city limits, so compliance with the City of San Antonio’s Unified Development Code is required. However, since the project is not situated on lands owned by a political subdivision of the State of Texas, compliance with the Antiquities Code of Texas (ACT) is not necessary.

Melanie Nichols served as Principal Investigator and Christopher Heiligenstein was the Project Archaeologist. Jacob Sullivan served as the Archaeological Technician. An intensive pedestrian survey covering 100 percent of the APE was completed, and included a comprehensive ground surface inspection supplemented by shovel testing in areas where soils retain the potential for cultural deposits. A total of 86 shovel tests were excavated during the investigation, exceeding the minimum archaeological survey standards established by the Council of Texas Archaeologists. The comprehensive surface inspection and shovel testing regimen employed during the investigation culminated in three isolated finds and two newly recorded sites, 41BX2069 and 41BX2070. Site 41BX2069 represents a surficial prehistoric lithic scatter comprised of debitage and temporally non-diagnostic expedient tools. Site 41BX2070 was discovered during shovel testing and represents a small, unknown prehistoric lithic scatter. Site boundaries for 41BX2069 and 41BX2070 are constrained by the limits of the APE, and the overall site integrity of both sites has been compromised by modern activities, including dumping and the construction of Marbach Rd. to the north. Based on the survey findings, Pape-Dawson recommends that site 41BX2069 and site 41BX2070 are not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under any criteria. Therefore, it is recommended that no further archaeological work is necessary for the proposed development and that the project be allowed to proceed.
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Introduction

KB Homes Inc. proposes to develop an 80.9-acre (78.4 hectare) parcel for residential purposes in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas (Figure 1). The project area is located in west San Antonio, on an undeveloped parcel south of Marbach Road between Loop 410 and Loop 1604. The archaeological project area (also known as the Area of Potential Effects (APE)) was defined as the footprint of the 80.9-acre (78.4 hectare) parcel proposed to undergo residential development. The proposed parcel is bound by Marbach Road to the north, a commercial storage facility to the west, Medio Creek to the south, and by an undeveloped parcel to the east. A transmission line runs east-west through the middle of the project APE. Since the specific types of improvements associated with this development have yet to be determined, the maximum depth of vertical impact is presently unknown. Since this project will require a permit in association with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act will be necessary. In addition, this project is located on land within the San Antonio city limits, so compliance with the City of San Antonio’s Unified Development Code is required. However, since the project is not situated on lands owned by a political subdivision of the State of Texas, compliance with the Antiquities Code of Texas (ACT) is not necessary.

At the request of KB Homes Inc., an intensive archaeological survey was performed by Pape-Dawson for the proposed Marbach Road Land Development project. Melanie Nichols served as Principal Investigator and Christopher Heiligenstein was the Project Archaeologist. Jacob Sullivan served as the Archaeological Technician. The goals of the investigation were to (1) locate all prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, if present, within the APE; (2) establish vertical and horizontal site boundaries, as appropriate with respect to the boundaries of the APE; (3) evaluate the significance of recorded sites for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Environmental Setting

Modern Climate
The project location is situated within the South Central climatic division of Texas, which is largely influenced by the Gulf of Mexico and classified as a humid subtropical climate with dry winters and hot summers (Swanson, 1995). The mean annual temperature for the San Antonio area is 68.7 °F, with a mean maximum temperature of 95 °F in July and August, and a mean low temperature of 39 °F in January. Annual precipitation averages 32.91 inches, with the heaviest accumulations occurring between May and June (US Climate Data, 2015).

Geology and Geomorphology
The project area is located within the Culebra Hill, TX 7.5-minute United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangle. The APE is predominantly geologically mapped as the Upper Cretaceous-age Navarro Group and Marlbrook, undivided, with the Upper Cretaceous-age Austin Chalk Formation
Figure 1: Project Location

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emerging on the footwall of a NE-SW striking normal fault at the northwest section of the APE (Bureau of Economic Geology 1983). The topographic profile illustrates two dominant geomorphological environments; an upland ridge bisected by two tributaries of Medio Creek rests in the northern half of the APE, while the southern-half is comprised of an upper terrace overlooking Medio Creek (Figure 2). The elevation in the northern upland ridge section ranges from 770 to 810 feet above sea level (asl). Along the upper terrace at the southern limit of the APE, the downslope elevation declines to approximately 740 feet asl (Figure 1). The upland ridge has been influenced by waterborne erosion, enhanced by the two ephemeral tributaries to Medio Creek that downcut the adjacent ridge shoulders and southern backslope, while the upper terrace situated within the southern portion of the APE has been shaped and influenced by ancient alluvial deposition derived from Medio Creek located approximately 175 m to the south.

![Figure 2 Upper Terrace overlooking Medio Creek Tributary, Facing East](image)

Soils

Soil types in the APE include Brackett gravelly clay loam (BrD), Houston Black clay (HsB), and Lewisville silty clay (LvB). Brackett gravelly clay loam, 3 to 12 percent slopes, is taxonomically classified as an inceptisol and derives from limestone residuum located along ridge summits, shoulders and slopes. Houston Black clay, 1 to 3 percent slopes, is classified as a vertisol. This soil series derives from the weathered calcareous shale of the Taylor Marl and Eagle Ford formations and is located along ridge summits and shoulders. Both soil types comprise the shallow upland soils associated with the upland
ridge and adjacent slopes within the northern half of the APE. Lewisville silty clay, 1 to 3 percent slopes, is found within the southern half of the APE and is classified as a mollisol derived from ancient alluvium and is situated on the upper terrace of Medio Creek. Soils within the APE are all upland soils, and therefore, archaeological deposits, if present, were anticipated to be on the ground surface or buried at depths reachable by shovel test excavation.

Cultural Chronology
Bexar County falls within the Central Texas archaeological region of the Central and Southern Planning Region as delineated by the THC (Mercado-Allinger et al, 1996). Cultural developments in this region are typically classified by archaeologists according to four primary chronological time periods: Paleoindian, Archaic, Late Prehistoric, and Historic. These classifications have been defined primarily by changes in material culture and subsistence strategies over time as evidenced through information and artifacts recovered from archaeological sites. This cultural chronology provides a brief summary of each major cultural period with reference to significant archaeological work that has occurred within the region.

Paleoindian (11,500 B.P. – 8,800 B.P.)
Although there is some debate about whether pre-Clovis Paleoindian peoples lived in Texas, there is evidence of Paleoindian occupation within Texas by 11,500 B.P. Collins (1995:376, 381) has proposed dividing this period into early and late phases, with Dalton, San Patrice, and Plainview possibly providing the transition between them. Research has shown Paleoindians were gathering wild plants and hunting large mammals (mammoth, bison, etc.) as well as smaller terrestrial and aquatic animals (Collins 1995: 381; Bousman et al. 2004: 75). Projectile points characteristic of the Paleoindian period in Central Texas are lanceolate-shaped and include Clovis, Plainview, and Folsom (Turner and Hester 1993). In Texas, most Paleoindian sites are classified as procurement or consumption sites (Bousman et al. 2004: 76-78), but a few, such as the Wilson-Leonard site in Williamson County (Collins 1995) and the Pavo Real site in Bexar County (Henderson 1980), have produced burials in context (Collins 1995: 383). Other Paleoindian sites discovered within Bexar County include site 41BX47 on Leon Creek (Tennis 1996), the Richard Beene site (41BX831) (Thoms et al. 2005), and the St. Mary’s Hall site (41BX229), which has provided insight into a more diverse diet for Paleoindian groups (Hester 1978).

As the climate warmed, the Paleoindian people began to shift away from hunting large animals. The changing environment, which led to extinction of the megafauna, likely influenced their decision to focus more on hunting small game animals, including deer and rabbit, as well as gathering edible roots, nuts, and fruits (Black 1989). This change in food supply, as well as a different set of stone tools, marks the transition into the Archaic Period.

Archaic (8,800 B.P. – 1,200 B.P.)
Usually divided into early, middle, late, and sometimes transitional sub-periods, the Archaic marks a gradual shift from hunting Megafauna and some smaller animals supplemented with wild plants to a focus on hunting and gathering medium and small animals and wild plants, and an eventual transition to
agriculture. Beginning with Clear Fork gouges and Guadalupe bifaces in the Early Archaic (8500 B.P. – 6000 B.P.) (Turner and Hester 1993; Collins 1995), Early Archaic people produced a variety of point types. The variety of points and their scattered distribution over a large area in the Early Archaic may indicate smaller groups of people moving over larger territories (Prewitt 1981). Point types transition to Bell-Andice-Calf Creek, Taylor, and Nolan-Travis points in the Middle Archaic (6000 B.P. – 4000 B.P.) (Turner and Hester 1993; Collins 1995), and burned rock middens become an important characteristic. The Middle Archaic focus on constructing burned rock ovens to cook a diverse array of plant food (Black 1989) suggests a slightly more sedentary focus. The Bulverde, Pedernales, Ensor, Frio, and Marcos points in the Late Archaic (4000 B.P. – 1300 B.P.) (Turner and Hester 1993; Collins 1995) mirror the diversity of point types found in the Early Archaic. During the Late Archaic, cemeteries, especially associated with rock shelters, become common in central Texas (Dockall et al. 2006). In Bexar County, sites with Early Archaic components include the Housman Road site (41BX47), the Richard Beene site (41BX831) (Nickels 2011), the Higgins site (41BX184), and the Panther Springs site (41BX228) (McNatt et al. 2000). While the Elm Waterhole site (41BX300) is representative of a Middle Archaic site within Bexar County (McNatt et al. 2000), the Granberg site (41BX17\41BX271) in San Antonio is a multi-component site with occupations from both the Middle and Late Archaic sub-periods.

**Late Prehistoric (1,200 B.P. – 250 B.P.)**

As the Archaic transitioned into the Late Prehistoric period, several technological changes become apparent. The most notable change is the use of the bow and arrow rather than the spear and atlatl, evidenced by smaller dart points. Another significant innovation is the creation and use of ceramic vessels. Some groups began to practice consistent agriculture during this time as well; there is some evidence that peoples in Central Texas may have incorporated agriculture into their lives, but primarily remained hunter gatherers (Collins 1995). Also during this period, there are possible indications of major population movements, changes in settlement patterns and perhaps lower population densities (Black 1989). Archaeologists divide the Late Prehistoric into two phases: the Austin phase, followed by the Toyah.

**Methods**

**Records Review**

Pape-Dawson archaeologists reviewed a desktop cultural resources assessment that Terracon did for KB Home in November 2014 prior to fieldwork (see Appendix). Terracon consulted the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas and the NRHP to locate previously recorded archaeological sites, NRHP listed properties and districts, Registered Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), Official State of Texas Historic Markers (OTHMs), and State Archeological Landmarks (SALs). They used a radius of approximately three kilometers from the APE. Pape-Dawson consulted the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas and the site records and maps at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) again in January to update the previously recorded sites information. The archaeologist also confirmed soils and geology data for the APE prior to the field effort.
Field Survey
On the dates of January 7-8 and 21, 2015, and on February 4, 2015, a crew of Pape-Dawson archaeologists conducted an archaeological investigation of the APE. The field work consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey, including a comprehensive ground surface inspection supplemented by judgmental shovel testing in areas exhibiting the potential for intact soils. Pedestrian transects trending north-to-south were established at intervals of no more than 98 ft. (30 m) across the width of the APE. Shovel testing was conducted throughout the APE along these transects at locations where soils were conducive to shovel testing, especially along the Medio Creek drainages. Shovel tests were approximately 30 centimeters (cm) (11.8 inches) in diameter and were excavated in 10 cm (3.9 inch) levels, terminating at sterile clayey subsoil, bedrock, or a maximum depth of 100 cm below the ground surface. Soils were screened through ¼” hardware mesh, with clay dominated soils divided and sorted by hand.

A total of 86 shovel tests were excavated during the investigation of the 80.9 acre-APE, which exceeds the State’s minimum standard of 1 shovel test per every 2 acres for project areas measuring between 11 to 100 acres in size. All shovel tests were recorded and mapped using a Trimble GPS unit, and backfilled upon completion. No artifacts were collected. Instead, artifacts observed during the ground surface inspection and shovel testing were photographed and recorded at their observed location in the field. Original paperwork will be curated at the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at the University of Texas at San Antonio following the specified standards of preparation.

Site Recording
All archaeological sites located were fully defined within the project’s APE. Sites and isolated finds were defined by a minimum of six shovel tests. Shovel tests were conducted along cardinal axes from the site center at intervals not exceeding 15 m (49 ft). Site boundaries were determined by two negative shovel tests at the terminus of each radial or by the horizontal extent of surface material within the APE. Site settings and representative cultural materials were photographed, and site boundaries were mapped and marked with the Trimble GPS device. A State of Texas Archeological Site Form was filled out for each identified site and submitted to the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas at Austin (TARL).

Results
Records Review
Terracon’s desktop review revealed no previously recorded archaeological sites, NRHP listed properties, RTHLs, OTHMs, or SALs within the project footprint. Within approximately three kilometers of the project site, they noted four recorded archaeological sites (41BX465, 41BX466, 41BX467, and 41BX1421) (see Appendix). Pape-Dawson’s update confirmed no previously recorded archaeological sites, NRHP listed properties, RTHLs, OTHMs, or SALs had been recorded within the project footprint or within 1 kilometer of the APE (Figure 3). However, the records review did identify one linear survey conducted in 1985 that falls within the 1 km buffer, and parallels the trajectory of Marbach Rd. located directly north
of the project APE. Two sites, 41BX466 and 41BX1876, are respectively located approximately 1.6 and 1.8 km to the northwest of the project APE, and contain a artifact assemblage similar in character to those observed at the newly recorded sites encountered during the current Pape-Dawson archaeological survey.

According to the site form, site 41BX466 is an unknown prehistoric occupation site recorded in 1977 featuring a light to moderate lithic scatter comprised of bifaces, scrapers, a single uniface, and lithic debitage. The site measures 75 meters (m) north-south by 30 m east-west in size, and is located on an upland slope emerging between the confluence of Medio Creek and an unnamed southern tributary. Soils at the upland site were described as very shallow soil overlying limestone bedrock.

Site 41BX1876, according to the site form, is an unknown, prehistoric open campsite recorded in 2010 containing a small scatter of burned and fire-cracked limestone rock, two multidirectional chert cores, one cortex-backed chert chopper and a lightly concentrated scatter of lithic debitage. The site measures 20 m north-south by 15 m east-west in size, and is located on the southern toe-slope of the upland divide between Caracol and Medio Creeks. Soils at the site were very shallow, with an average thickness of deposit ranging between 0-10 cm below surface (cmbs).

Field Survey

Archaeologists observed that the northern half of the APE is predominantly characterized by an upland ridge with shallow soils and cobbles on surface (Figure 4). Due to the high vegetation density throughout this section of the APE, the ground surface visibility was generally poor at an average of 30 percent. Shovel tests within the northern half of the APE largely encountered shallow upland soils, characterized by greyish brown clay to clay loam overlying dark grayish brown clay with abundant limestone gravels and cobbles at 20 to 30 cmbs.
Figure 3: Cultural Resources Map

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The terrain at the southern half of the APE is largely comprised of the basal portion of the upland backslope transitioning to the moderately deeper soils of the upper terrace overlooking Medio Creek to the south. Vegetation is sparser within this section, owing largely to an east-to-west trending transmission line corridor that divides the northern and southern halves of the APE as well as an open field located on the Medio Creek terrace (Figures 5 and 6). As a result, ground surface visibility slightly improves to an average of 50 percent in the southern half of the APE. Due to the potential for intact soils, more shovel tests were excavated in this portion of the project area. Shovel tests within the southern half of the APE generally exposed greyish brown clay to clay loam overlying greyish brown clay with brown mottling at 40 cmbs.
Of the 86 shovel tests excavated during the survey, seven proved positive for cultural deposits, leading to the recordation of site 41BX2070 and three isolated finds within the APE (Figure 7). Additionally, a broad stretch along the northeast portion of the APE contained cultural artifacts on the ground surface, although all shovel tests in this area were negative for subsurface archaeological material. Consequently, site 41BX2069, was defined by the surrounding topographic features and the observable surface expression of the lithic scatter. The following section discusses the isolated finds and sites 41BX2069 and 41BX2070 in greater detail.
Figure 7: Site and Shovel Test Locations
Site Descriptions

Isolated Find 1

This isolated find was located in the middle of the APE, north of the transmission line. One flake and a piece of fire cracked rock (FCR) were recovered from the top 10 centimeters of a shovel test. No other cultural material was observed or recovered from further shovel testing.

Isolated Find 2

Located adjacent to the southern boundary of the transmission line, the sole artifact recovered was a broken flake. No other cultural material was observed on the surface, and further shovel testing did not yield any other artifacts.

Isolated Find 3

This flake was found in the southwestern corner of the APE (Figure 8). No other cultural material was observed or recovered from the surface or other shovel tests.

41BX2069

Setting and Description

Site 41BX2069 (Figure 9) is a very light, broad, surficial lithic scatter covering an area of approximately 76,485 square meters (18.9 acres) (Figures 9 and 10). Located approximately 66 m (218 feet (ft)) south...
of Marbach Road, the site lies on an overgrown and partially utilized tract at an elevation of 770 to 790 ft above mean sea level (asl). An abandoned residential road trends north-south through the center of the site, and refuse dumping is common in the areas surrounding the abandoned road. The site is situated on an upland finger ridge and the adjacent ridge shoulders and southern backslope. An unnamed tributary to Medio Creek, west of the site, bisects and downcuts the ridge. The site was not observed to extend beyond the east terrace of this tributary which thus establishes a geographic boundary defining the western limit of the site. A transmission line corridor trending east-west denotes the site’s southern boundary. The construction of Marbach Road and an indoor soccer complex north of the project APE have likely disturbed any extension of the site beyond the APE to the north. Vegetation in the area is comprised of dense mesquite and other scrubs, with scattered paths of short grasses and visible surface gravels/cobbles in areas of very shallow soil depths. Ground surface visibility averaged 30 percent at the time of the survey. Soils within the site are mapped as Houston Black clay, 1 to 3 percent slopes, and Brackett gravelly clay loam, 3 to 12 percent slopes (USDA 2014).

**Work Performed**

The site was discovered during a pedestrian survey of the eastern portion of the project area. The site was initially observed as a lightly concentrated surface scatter. Twenty shovel tests were excavated within proximity of observed surface artifacts in order to investigate the potential for intact subsurface deposits. All shovel tests were found to be negative for cultural materials, and the site appears to be entirely surficial in context. Transects were maintained at 30 m intervals as the lithic scatter was continually observed until reaching the east terrace of the tributary defining the western boundary of the site. The site was not observed to the west of the drainage.

**Artifacts**

The lithic scatter is very light throughout the site, with no subsurface deposits. Tools including one endscraper, two utilized flakes, one modified flake, two multidirectional bifacial cores, and one broken biface were observed among the scatter of debitage (Figure 10). No diagnostic artifacts were found within the site. The lack of diagnostic artifacts prevents identification of a specific temporal and/or cultural affiliation.
Conclusion and Recommendations

Site 41BX2069 is a broad, lightly concentrated lithic scatter site of unknown prehistoric age located east of the unnamed tributary to Medio Creek. All twenty shovel tests were negative for cultural materials, confirming that the site is entirely surficial. No diagnostic artifacts were found at the site. Due to the lack of diagnostic artifacts, features, and intact subsurface archaeological deposits Site 41BX2069 is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D.

41BX2070

Setting and Description

Site 41BX2070 represents a prehistoric lithic scatter located within northwest corner of the APE, and is located approximately 15 m (53 ft) south of Marbach Road (Figure 11). The site lies on an overgrown, unutilized segment of the tract at an elevation of 810 ft asl. The site is located toward the crest of an upland ridge, with shallow slopes flanking the ridge to the north and south. An ephemeral tributary trending north-south is located 200 m to the east of the site and downcuts the upland ridge. Vegetation in the area is comprised of dense mesquite and other scrubs, with scattered patches of short grasses and visible surface gravels and cobbles in areas of very shallow soil depths. Average ground surface
visibility was 20 percent at the time of the survey. Soils in the area are mapped as Brackett gravelly clay loam, 3 to 12 percent slopes (USDA 2014).

**Work Performed**

A total of nine shovel tests was excavated along the ridge, four of which were positive for cultural material. Soils within the site were very shallow, typically extending to a depth between 0 and 20 cmbs before encountering the limestone gravel and a cobble rich C-horizon. The narrowness of the project area in this section of the parcel hindered delineation of the site to the west, north and east; the site may extend beyond the APE in any or all of these directions. The site measures approximately 50 m (169 ft) N-S by 30 m (106 ft) E-W occupying an area of roughly 0.27 acres (11,754 square feet).

**Artifacts**

Cultural material recovered from the shovel tests were found in the 0 to 10 cmbs range. No diagnostic artifacts were recovered. Artifacts observed were limited to two chert flakes and nine pieces of FCR (Figure 12). The FCR are small, measuring between 1 and 2 cm in diameter. The angular to crenelated fracture surfaces of the FCR observed as well as their small size suggest they derived from a boiling episode. Additionally, none of the limestone gravels or cobbles found in association with the FCR exhibit evidence of thermal alteration.
Figure 11: 41BX2070 Site Map
Conclusion and Recommendations

Site 41BX2070 is a prehistoric lithic scatter site of unknown age with cultural deposits extending to a depth of 10 cmbs. The site is located in the narrow northwestern corner of the APE, and it is possible the site could extend outside the APE. Four of the nine shovel tests excavated within the site were positive for cultural material, all of which was non-diagnostic. Due to the lack of soil deposition, diagnostic artifacts, and features, Site 41BX2070 is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D.

Summary and Recommendations

In compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA and the City of San Antonio’s Unified Development Code, Pape-Dawson conducted an intensive archaeological survey of the proposed Marbach Road development in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The archaeological project area (also known as the Area of Potential Effect {APE}) was defined as the footprint of the 80.9-acre (78.4 hectare) parcel proposed to undergo development for residential purposes. A total of 86 shovel tests were excavated within the APE, seven of which were positive for cultural material. Two new archaeological sites, 41BX2069 and 41BX2070, and three isolated finds were recorded as a result of this work.
The project area contained areas of disturbance, most notably a transmission line that runs east-west through the middle of the property. Other disturbances include the construction of Marbach Road and an indoor soccer facility to the north, and evidence of non-historic-age trash disposal throughout the site. Soils were shallow throughout the APE, and cultural materials observed were either on the surface or shallowly buried. Site 41BX2069 is a surface lithic scatter located in the northeastern portion of the APE and could extend outside the limits of the project APE. Although twenty shovel tests were excavated within proximity of observed surface artifacts, all were negative for cultural materials. No features or diagnostic artifacts were observed at this site.

Site 41BX2070 is a prehistoric open campsite site of unknown age located in the northwestern corner of the APE. The site could extend outside the APE. Nine shovel tests were excavated, four of which were positive for non-diagnostic cultural material. Archaeological deposits extend to a depth of 10 cmbs. No features or diagnostic artifacts were observed at this site.

Due to the lack of diagnostic artifacts and intact features at both sites 41BX2069 and 41BX2070, as well as the surficial and/or shallow nature of the deposits, both sites are recommended not eligible for listing in the NRHP under any of the applicable criteria. As a result, no further archaeological work is recommended for this project, and construction should be allowed to proceed.
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United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Desktop Cultural Resources Assessment

KB Homes Marbach Road Tract
Marbach Road
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

November 4, 2014
Terracon Project No. 90147453

Prepared for:
Vickery and Associates
San Antonio, Texas

Prepared by:
Terracon Consultants, Inc.
6911 Blanco Road
San Antonio, Texas
November 4, 2014

Re: Desktop Cultural Resources Assessment
Marbach Road Tract
Marbach Road west of Marbach Oaks
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas
Terracon Project No. 90147453

Dear Mr. [Name]

Terracon is pleased to submit this Desktop Cultural Resources Assessment report for the Marbach Road Tract project located in western San Antonio, Texas.

Terracon has completed a Desktop Cultural Resources Assessment for the proposed development of approximately 104 acres located on the south side of Marbach Road west of Marbach Oaks. As discussed below, the purpose of Terracon’s Desktop Cultural Resources Assessment is to assist the client in evaluating and complying with requirements relative to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the Antiquities Code of Texas, defined in 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800 and 33 CFR Part 325, as well as Title 13 Part 2 Chapter 26 of the Texas Administrative Code, enforced by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Texas Historical Commission (THC), respectively. Additionally, public and private development projects within San Antonio are subject to review by the City’s Office of Historic Preservation as promulgated by the Unified Development Code. This report is a cursory review of the site with regards to potential impacts to recorded and previously unrecorded historic properties.

Area of Potential Effect and Natural Setting

The proposed development’s entire project area, the overall area of potential effect (APE), is an approximately 104-acre tract of land bounded on the north by Marbach Road, on the west by a commercial development, on the east by undeveloped property, and on the south by (and including) Medio Creek and undeveloped property. Residential development is concentrated along the north and west boundaries, and these areas constitute the APE for direct impacts. An additional APE for direct impacts would be a utility line that is proposed to run north to south from the residential development towards Medio Creek. The remainder of the project area is considered the APE for indirect impacts.

The Culebra Hill, TX 7.5-minute United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangle map depicts the APE on a south-facing slope in the uplands overlooking Medio Creek. Elevation
along Marbach Road ranges approximately 810-790 feet above sea level (asl), and the elevation of Medio Creek in the southern end of the project area is approximately 740 feet asl; there is approximately 70 feet of elevation change across approximately 3000 feet north-south. Two unnamed tributaries of the Medio Creek break the southerly slope and flow north to south through the project area.

The natural environment of the overall APE consists of the hydrology mentioned above, a climate classified as subtropical with dry winters and hot-humid summers (Swanson 1995), vegetation of the Blackland Prairie (Griffith et al. 2004), soils, and bedrock geology. As mapped by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (Taylor et al. 1991), soils in the APE consist of Brackett gravelly clay loam (BrD), Rock outcrop-Olmos complex (HgD), Houston Black clay (HsB), Lewisville silty clay (LvB), Patrick soils (PaB), and Tinn and Frio soils (Tf). These soils are located on different features of the physical landscape. BrD and HgD soils are relatively shallow and found on summits and slopes of interfluvial ridges. HsB soils are found in similar settings but are moderately deep; however, HsB soils have a calcareous subsoil present at approximately six inches below surface, which indicates considerable stability for a relatively great period of time. LvB and PaB are found on alluvial terraces and are moderately deep, and Tf are deep soils situated in modern floodplain settings. Bedrock geology of the APE, mapped by the Bureau of Economic Geology, is Cretaceous-aged Austin Chalk (Kau) and Navarro Group and Marlbrook, undivided (Kn) (Barnes 1982).

Using the natural environment to evaluate the APE for its potential to contain cultural resources, deeper soils situated on terraces would generally contain the greatest potential for preserved cultural material, whereas the shallow upland soils would likely leave materials exposed on the surface for long periods of time. Historical land use, such as agriculture, range, dumping, etc., would affect the preservation of cultural materials if any were present.

**Records Review**

The Texas Archaeological Sites Atlas database (Atlas) as well as the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) informed this records review. Data from each are presented below. Review of the Atlas showed that all but a thin linear portion of the APE along Marbach Road had previously not been surveyed, and the survey along Marbach Road yielded no cultural materials in proximity to the APE. Additionally, no known historic properties are recorded in the APE. Within a radius of approximately three kilometers, however, there are four recorded sites, 41BX465, 41BX466, 41BX467, and 41BX1421.

Each of the four sites named above are set in proximity to Medio Creek, and located farther upstream and downstream are additional sites. Site 41BX466 is an upland lithic and burned rock scatter that was determined not to have potential for further archaeological research. Though found in Medio Creek alluvium, site 41BX1421 was considered to be not eligible for NRHP inclusion. This site was also composed of lithic debris and burned rocks. Sites 41BX465 and 41BX467 were recorded as composed of lithic debris found in Medio Creek alluvium, and further work was recommended for both sites.
Review of NRHP listings by location showed that the closest listed site (Huebner-Onion Homestead and Stagecoach Stop) is approximately seven miles to the east.

**Resources Review**

Historical resources used to inform this review included topographic maps and aerial imagery available through Perry-Castañeda Library Map collection and Google Earth.

Historical topographic maps for the Culebra Hill, TX quadrangle show that the APE has been largely undeveloped since 1953. By 1966, a portion of Marbach Road extended to its present-day location, and by 1973, an overhead utility line corridor crossed the APE. Google Earth imagery confirms the lack of development since January 1995, but it also shows the APE with a series of unfinished roads or trails.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

This review relied primarily upon public and nonpublic sources of information, as well as information from the client and personal communication with the Terracon biologist who completed field work to satisfy other permitting requirements.

The APE has not previously been surveyed and no previously recorded cultural resources are present on the 104-acre tract. Nearby, recorded sites in comparable settings are documented where survey has been conducted. The physical characteristics of the property (i.e., topography, soils, geology, etc.) would have a moderate potential for retaining site integrity in nature, and the historical lack of development within the APE suggests that any cultural remains located within the APE would be accordingly preserved.

Given such considerations, Terracon believes that further, field-based evaluation of cultural resources within the project area would likely be recommended by municipal, state, and federal agencies prior to proceeding with the project.

Sincerely,

Terracon Consultants, Inc.

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Attachments: Location Map, Aerial Image, Topographic Map, Soil Map
References Cited

Barnes, Virgel E.

Taylor, F. B., R. B. Hailey, and D. L. Richmond


Swanson, Eric R.