Monitoring of the South Flores Parking Garage Expansion, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

by
Nathan DiVito
and
Kristi M. Ulrich

Texas Antiquities Permit No. 5620

Prepared for:
Bexar County Infrastructure Services
233 N Pecos, Suite 420
San Antonio, Texas

Prepared by:
Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
Technical Report, No. 22

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Abstract:

Between May 17th and 24th 2010, the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) of the University of Texas San Antonio, contracted with Bexar County Infrastructure Services Department to monitor the removal of asphalt from the parking lot at the future site of the expanded South Flores Parking Garage. The project area is located in downtown San Antonio, Texas, just southwest of the intersection of Nueva Street and South Flores. Given its proximity to the historic City center, the project area had potential for producing significant cultural resources. This project entailed the monitoring of mechanical excavations. During the course of the project, multiple foundations and a drainage system were identified and recorded before their removal. No Spanish Colonial or prehistoric deposits were encountered during this project. No remnants of the pre-1849 structure were noted in the northeastern portion of the tract. It is likely that the structure was destroyed when the basement of the dry goods warehouse was constructed in this location. As a result, the CAR recommends no additional field investigations in the APE.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Center for Archaeological Research at The University of Texas at San Antonio (CAR-UTSA) was contracted by Bexar County Infrastructure Services Department to conduct archaeological monitoring associated with the planned expansion of a parking garage located in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. Because the project area is owned by Bexar County and the funding for the construction is also County derived, the project falls under the jurisdiction of the Antiquities Code of Texas. In addition, because the project area is located in a historically sensitive portion of the City, it also falls under the oversight of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Division (COSAHPD) as laid out in the City of San Antonio’s Unified Development Code, Chapter 35. As a result, the CAR consulted with both agencies during this project. Monitoring was conducted under Texas Antiquities Committee Permit Number 5620 over the entire project area but the main purpose of the monitoring of pavement removal was to assess cultural resources and to detect any architectural features that might still exist within a 150-x-150 ft area near the northeast corner of the Area of Potential Effect (APE) where a structure pre-dating 1850 is known to have once stood.

Area of Potential Effect

The APE is located at 227 South Flores in San Antonio, Texas (Figure 1-1). The project location is in New City Block (NCB) 102, Lots 7, 8, 9, and 16. The APE is approximately two blocks southwest of the Bexar County Justice Center Expansion. San Pedro Creek which is currently channelized with the banks and base constructed of concrete, forms the western property line of the APE. Until this project began, the project area was used as a parking lot adjacent to the southern side of another Bexar County Parking Garage located at the corner of Nueva Street and South Flores. Both facilities are slated to service the patrons at the Bexar County Courthouse and Justice Center.

Approximately one-acre of ground surface will be affected by the proposed expansion. In preparation for the new construction, the current paving was removed. The expansion project will impact the areas surface down to between five and six feet below ground surface. However, drilled piers spaced within the APE effect will extend 40'-50' below the surface to stabilize the structure. The expansion will ultimately consist of a 5-7 story parking garage that will house approximately 500 cars. The new structure will occur to the south of, and adjacent to, the currently existing garage.
Scope of Work

A comprehensive review of the available archival data, historic documents, and maps was conducted to determine the extent of the occupation and use of the APE. The purpose of the archival research and
Literature review was to determine the occupation and use history of the project area and whether the property had the potential for producing significant cultural deposits under the existing parking lot (Figure 1-2). In addition, an examination of the archaeological sites within the vicinity of the APE was conducted utilizing previous archaeological reports and the Texas Historical Commission’s Texas Archeological Sites Atlas. To investigate the property one of the authors (KMU) made use of deed records, historic maps, and other documents that highlighted the history of the area. The records utilized included the Bexar County Spanish Archives, Bexar County Deed Records (BCDR), Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, and the Texas Sites Atlas. Additional information was gathered from previous research highlighting the development and growth of San Antonio de Bexar. To aid the review of the present report, the relevant portion of the results of the historical review will be briefly summarized in the next chapter (Ulrich 2010).

From the results of the archival research the CAR recommended that archaeological monitoring be conducted on the asphalt and concrete removal activities. The THC concurred with these recommendations. Monitoring was recommended over the entire project area but the main focus was to be a 150-x-150 meter area in the northeastern portion. This area contains the greatest potential for cultural deposits and/or architectural features pre-dating 1850. All encountered architectural features and cultural materials were to be documented and photographed to define their NRHP and SAL eligibility. All artifacts collected were processed and are curated at the Center for Archaeological Research.

![Project Area Before Construction](image)

Figure 1-2. The project area as it looked before the construction.
Chapter 2: Summary of Historical Background

The APE is located within two blocks of the Bexar County Courthouse, the José Antonio Navarro State Historical Park, and in proximity to Plaza de Armas, Plaza de las Islas, and San Fernando Cathedral (Figure 2-1). The APE consists of a parcel of land that was given to Vicente Travieso prior to 1779. Travieso was one of the 15 families that were brought from the Canary Islands in 1731 (Leal 1982). At his death, ownership of the property was passed to his son, Tomas. The parcel of land appeared to have been kept in the family until the mid-19th century. At this point, the larger portion of land was parceled out into smaller sections and sold to local residents.

Examination of historic maps reveals that the APE was occupied and used for residential and commercial purposes throughout the late 19th to early 20th century. At least two structures that once occupied the property were constructed prior to 1873, as can be seen on Koch’s Birds Eye View. At least one of these adobe structure was constructed ca. 1849 (Cox et al. 1990) and may have been occupied until after 1912. Construction activities associated with the expansion of the parking garage have the potential for encountering remnants of this early adobe structure. Evidence presented on the Sanborn maps indicates

Figure 2-1. The location of the project area overlaid on the 1912 Rullman map depicting San Antonio de Bexar in 1837 (Rullman 1912).
that a portion of the property was used as a stockyard for several years. This appears to play into the increased use of the Caminos as routes for cattle drives in the late 19th century.

**Review of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps**

The Sanborn maps indicate that several of the structures had been present on the property from at least 1873 into the 20th century. The APE is present on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of San Antonio. CAR had access to maps dating back to 1885. The map created in 1885 depicted the area to the north of the APE as the Smith, Redman & Co. Stock Yard. Within the APE, a portion is labeled as the Kentucky Stock Yard (Figure 2-2). Two structures located in the northern portion of the APE are labeled as dwellings. One of these, the structure just to the north of the Kentucky Stock Yard is a dwelling with an attached office. Attached to the dwelling was a structure that appears to be labeled as “vacant”. Several outbuildings are also depicted on the 1885 map to the west of the dwelling, including a carriage shed. The information obtained from the 1885 map was compared to Koch’s Birds Eye View drawn of 1873 (Koch 1873). It appears that the stockyard was not in business at the time of the drawing, but several structures are similar to those depicted on the 1885 Sanborn Map (Figure 2-3). Note, however, that the scale of Koch’s drawing is not accurate and therefore the APE depicted on the map appears slightly off.

![Figure 2-2. Eastern portion of the project area on the 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.](image-url)
The next map in the sequence indicates that there were no changes made to the portion of the lot that makes up the APE through 1888. The same structures are depicted on the map as in 1885, though one previously vacant structure is now labeled as a dwelling, and the Kentucky Stock Yard occupies the majority of the APE (Figure 2-4).
The next map in the sequence dates to 1892 (Figure 2-5). At this time, there is no mention of the Kentucky Stock Yards, though two structures that were associated with it in the past are still present on the map. The dwellings present in 1885 and 1888 are also present. A few outbuildings that were noted on the previous maps are missing suggesting that they were demolished (Figure 2-5). The carriage shed also appears to be missing from the 1892 map although it is possible that it is the unmarked structure located along the property line.

A few changes are noted in the next map drawn in 1896 (Figure 2-6). Additional stables appear to have been added to what was the Kentucky Stock Yard in 1888. The area on the 1896 map is referred to as the Sale Stable, with the addition labeled as “Old Shed”. The northeast portion of the APE changed only slightly, though outbuildings associated with the northernmost dwelling have disappeared from the map.
By 1904, the properties have undergone some changes that consist of the reappearance of an outbuilding that may have been the carriage house (Figure 2-7). In addition, it appears that a property line has been drawn to the west of the northern dwelling. The Sales Stable changed shape, and is now not as deep in the property as in 1896. The structure located just north of the Sales Stable had a second story added during the eight-year span between the two maps. In addition, the attached room that was once labeled as a dwelling is now been identified as storage. The dwelling that was located in the northeast portion of the APE is now been identified as adobe.
The Sanborn map of 1912 shows significant changes to the structures present on the lot (Figure 2-8). The Sales Stable and adjacent structure was converted into a rectangular building. It also is possible that the structure in the 1904 map was razed and this was a new one. The adobe structure that was located in the northeast portion of the APE appears to still be standing in 1912.
The last of the historic Sanborn Fire Insurance maps consulted shows the lot as it appeared between 1912 though 1954 (Figure 2-9). This map shows significant changes to the APE. All previous structures are gone. In place of the adobe dwelling is a wholesale dry goods store. The rectangular building that had appeared on the 1912 map is now a paint store. A machinery repair garage and a tractor repair facility are added in the central portion of the APE.

Figure 2-9. *The project area overlaid on the 1912-1954 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. The blue rectangle is the approximate location of an underground gasoline storage tank removed in 2000.*

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps reveal that the APE underwent several changes between 1885 and 1954. The most drastic change was documented in the 1912-1954 version of the map. Most important to the history of the lot is the presence of an adobe dwelling on the northeastern portion of the APE as early as 1849. The available records consulted by CAR staff did not shed light on the actual construction date of the dwelling. However, the fact that the structure remained in use through at least 1912, makes it one of the longest used structures in the APE.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Field Methods
Identified cultural features exposed during the excavation of the parking lot were recorded in daily notes, listing the location, dimensions, depth and types of materials encountered. Asphalt was removed starting in the northeast corner heading east to west then to the southwest and back west to east. When deposits or architectural features were encountered, the removal of paving and soil was halted temporarily and the deposit and/or feature was photographed, measured and its location mapped prior to removal. Controlled excavations were to only occur in areas thought to have cultural materials or features pre-dating 1850. Project area photographs were taken to record the status of on-going work on a daily basis. Diagnostic artifacts consisting of brick and tile aided in the dating of cultural features encountered during the course of the project. Modern artifacts and building materials were not collected and were only noted.

Laboratory Methods
All cultural materials and records obtained and generated during the project were prepared in accordance with federal regulation 36 CFR part 79, and THC requirements for State Held-in-Trust collections. Additionally, the materials were curated in accordance with current guidelines of the CAR. Artifacts processed in the CAR laboratory were washed, air-dried, and stored in 4 mil zip locking archival-quality bags. Materials needing extra support were double-bagged. Acid-free labels were placed in all artifact bags. Each laser printer generated label contained provenience information and a corresponding lot number. The single piece of historic ceramic was labeled with permanent ink over a clear coat of acrylic and covered by another acrylic coat. Artifacts have been separated by class and stored in acid-free boxes identified with standard tags. Field notes, forms, photographs, and drawings were placed in labeled archival folders. Digital photographs were printed on acid-free paper, labeled with archivally appropriate materials, and placed in archival-quality sleeves. All field forms were completed with pencil. Any soiled forms were placed in archival quality page protectors. Ink-jet produced maps; illustrations, etc. were also placed in archival quality page protectors to provide against accidental smearing due to moisture. All building materials collected were cleaned with a solution of vinegar to remove the thin layer of calcium carbonate deposited on them and were later rinsed with water. All collected materials and project related documentation are permanently housed at the CAR.

Additional Considerations
In consultation with the THC, subsequent to proper analyses and quantification, artifacts possessing little scientific value were discarded pursuant to Chapter 26.27(g)(2) of the Antiquities Code of Texas. Artifact classes discarded specific to this project included redundant building materials. Prior to discard, the
provenience information and weights of the building materials were recorded. A representative sample of the building materials recovered at the site was retained and curated.
Chapter 4: Results and Recommendations

In order to make describing the cultural materials and architectural features easier, the project area is divided into four quadrants, northeast, northwest, southwest and southeast (Figure 4-1).

Northeastern Portion of the APE

As noted in the background summary, the northeastern portion of the project area was the main focus of this monitoring project and had the greatest potential to yield cultural deposits and/or features pre-dating 1850. Upon removal of the asphalt in this corner, the foundation of the post-1912 dry goods warehouse was uncovered. It appeared that at least some of the warehouse building had been demolished into the basement of the structure (Figure 4-2). The basement was covered almost all the way to the top with fill and other debris.
The foundation of the warehouse was 50 cm wide and measured 33 meters E-W and 19.6 meters N-S. The walls of the basement are painted and a thick red-brown stripe is near the top of the basement wall. The line extends along the northern wall of the foundation. Some of the fill was excavated along this wall to determine the depth of the basement. Fill was excavated to 120 cm below the red stripe where it became too dangerous to continue. A soil change was noted at 90 cm below the stripe, however everything encountered below was also fill. When heavy equipment was later used to excavate the lot to its terminal depth of 5 feet, the bottom of the basement had not been reached.

The foundation of the structure had large slots going down to right above the large red stripe. The slots were evenly spaced along the entire length of the foundation (Figure 4-3).
These slots were probably used as supports for floor joists for the first floor of the building. Spiral rebar was also noted in and around the footprint of the dry goods warehouse (Figure 4-4). The rebar is consistent with buildings that would have been constructed in the early 1900’s. In addition, a large piece of twisted lead was collected from the northern portion of the foundation of the dry goods store.
During the excavation of the fill in the basement, samples of the several varieties of tile, probably part of the dry goods warehouse, were recovered. Tile types recovered included: concrete tiles, floor tiles and terrazzo tiles (Figure 4-5).

![Figure 4-5. Collection of tile samples recovered from basement of dry goods warehouse.](image)

A sample of the concrete tile was collected. It is produced by mixing concrete with other minerals like mica, marble or onyx. The sample collected was multi-layered and green on top with mica and other minerals mixed throughout. Many different styles of floor tiles were collected from the basement area. Some have colored designs and some are comprised of mixed materials. The colors include red, green, black, and white. A partial maker’s mark of “…NTON…” was noted on the back of one of the tiles. This may suggest that some of the tile was made in San Antonio, perhaps by the San Antonio Tile Company, although the partial mark is not enough to make a definitive claim (Figure 4-6). The majority of the tiles collected had concrete on the backside that hid maker’s marks and prevented them from being identified.
In addition to the concrete tiles, Terrazzo tile was also collected. Terrazzo tile is made of marble, granite, onyx and glass chips mixed with a binder and then embedded in cement (Flooring and Carpets 2010). The terrazzo is then cured, polished and cut into tiles or formed. The samples collected are green terrazzo tiles with onyx and marble chips throughout and consist of fragments of what appear to be a rail, column, or curbing of some type. The terrazzo observed in the field was bell shaped and decorative with a swirl design and may have made up a column and was observed in the eastern corner of the dry goods warehouse but was not collected (Figure 4-7).
Though the bottom of the basement was not encountered, the depth can be estimated due to the fact that the adjoining room had only a small amount of debris in it and measured about 8 feet deep. Since the basement of the dry goods warehouse was dug where the 1840’s adobe structure was located, there is no possibility that any of the 1840’s structure is intact. It was likely destroyed during the construction of the basement of the dry goods store.

**Northwestern Portion of the APE**

The northwestern portion of the project area consisted of concrete varying in thickness from 10 to 20 cm, along the eastern edge to 50cm or more along the channel of San Pedro Creek. Here the parking lot drops off sharply about a half meter down to a small paved area above the creek channel. Underlying the concrete was reddish brown fill with small to medium sized gravels. A long, two meter high, wall ran along the entire northern portion of the project area and divided this parking lot from the adjacent parking garage (Figure 4-8).

![Figure 4-8. Demolition of low wall on northern portion of APE.](image)

This wall was modern and was demolished during the course of the project. The concrete in this area also contained some of the farm equipment wheels encased in the concrete as seen in the adjacent southwestern quadrant of the APE (Figure 4-1). A small assortment of artifacts was collected from a trash scatter associated with a crushed ceramic sewer pipe (Figure 4-9). Artifacts collected include two pieces of ferrous scrap metal, a piece of aqua bottle glass and a small piece of undecorated white earthenware ceramic. These artifacts date to the mid 19th century and with the exception of the sewer pipe, no
architectural features were noted in this area.

![Figure 4-9. Sewer pipe remnants with associated artifact scatter.](image)

**Southwestern Portion of the APE**

The southwestern portion of the project area also had concrete that was the same thickness and distribution as in the northwestern portion of the APE. This area also had the same fill paving base as the northwestern area. The adjacent Bill Miller distribution parking lot is the boundary of the lot and a chain link fence runs along the property line.

The concrete removed from this area of the lot also contained large wheels from early 19th century farming equipment, as well as other metal and other items that could be used for reinforcement. Fencing, wire and scrap metal were noted encased in the concrete. Sixty to seventy wheels were laid out evenly spaced over the southwestern portion of the project area and parts of the northwest and southeast portions (Figures 4-1, 4-10). The concrete was then poured over the wheels and other metal objects which acted as reinforcement, therefore strengthening the concrete surface of the parking lot.
The wheels found are likely from farm implements from the tractor repair shop that would have stood in this quadrant. The building first shows up on the post-1912 Sanborn fire map (see Figure 2-9). The wheels observed were various sizes, ranging from 105-120 cm in diameter. There were two different types of wheels, those with single spokes and those with alternating spokes. In addition, among the two styles of spokes, round spokes and flat spokes were noted (Figure 4-11). Some wheels also had the inner and outer hub assemblies still intact. Many of the wheels were in bad condition and heavily rusted.
In 2000, a large underground gasoline storage tank was removed from the middle of the southwestern quadrant of the APE (see Figure 2-9). The soil in this area was black and oily and smelled like fuel. The soil was undoubtedly contaminated by the leaking of the storage tank and it covered a six meter diameter area (Figure 4-12). A small scatter of crushed brick and window glass was observed just north of this area.

The only artifact recovered was one of the large wheels (Figure 4-13). It was entirely encased in concrete and had to be chipped out with a mini-jackhammer. It is 105 cm in diameter and is the single, flat spoke variety. The wheel will be cleaned and stabilized and used in a public outreach exhibit.
These wheels would have been used on early 19th century farm equipment that would have been worked on at the nearby tractor repair shop (Oldham 2010). The variation in types suggests the wheels are from many different types of farm implements. Considering that rubber tires for farm tractors and implements were first sold in 1932, the wheels from the repair shop would have been manufactured prior to this time. It would have been likely that these wheels types would have been repaired in the shop up until the end of the 1930’s and maybe well into the 1940’s (Antique Farming 2010).

Southeastern Portion of the APE
The southeastern portion of the project area consisted of asphalt and concrete with the same relative thickness as the rest of the lot. The same fill paving base was also noted. The concrete in this area also contained more of the large wheels noted on the southwestern portion (Figure 4-1). This area contained the most architectural features of any of the quadrants.
A large brick drainage system extended along the northern and western perimeter of this quadrant. It is comprised of nine drains all composed of the same type of brick. The drains were covered with iron grates that measured 35 x 45 cm wide (Figure 4-15a). The drains were filled with modern fill, trash, and pieces of decayed and burnt wood. The roof of the four western drains is arched (Figure 4-15b). Some of
the bricks inside the middle drain on the west side were badly burned on the side facing into the drain. The southern-most drain extends past the chain link fence boundary. The drains running along the northern perimeter open underneath to the south and have the same overall profile as the western four drains. All of the drains are spaced evenly at 3.6 meters apart and are all the same dimension. The western drains seem to run east while the northern drains seem to run south back toward a central point but nothing was observed in this area.

According to the Sanborn maps the Kentucky Stockyard would have been in this area in 1888 (Figure 2-4). Generally, stockyards do not have elaborate underground drainage systems and are used to feed and house livestock. Following the Kentucky stockyard sales stables were set up and are shown on the 1896 and 1904 Sanborn maps (Figures 2-6 and 2-7). Given the date of the bricks in the drains, and the fact that stockyards and sales stables do not have underground features, the drainage system is likely associated with the building shown on the 1912 Sanborn map (Figure 2-8). The drainage seems to follow the outside footprint of this structure. Whatever the drains led into was probably destroyed by previous construction activities.

![Figure 4-15. Unknown foundation.](image-url)
Another foundation was uncovered just south of the southern-most drainage pit (Figure 4-15). The edge is 2.4 meters west of the drains and is in alignment with the western-most wall of the dry goods warehouse foundation. It was comprised of a thick concrete foundation of unknown thickness with rebar extending horizontally out of it. It extended past the southern boundary of the project area. The foundation extended to an unknown depth below the terminal depth of anticipated impact. No artifacts were collected from this feature.

A small room was uncovered 9.5 meters from the edge of South Flores Street and adjacent to the southern portion of the dry goods store foundation (Figure 4-16).

The room is 2.44 meters wide and about six meters long. It is adjacent to the southern side of the dry goods warehouse foundation. It is comprised of two red brick walls with concrete arches supporting the reinforced concrete cover. The northern side of the room opens into the basement of the dry goods store. This area is partially filled with debris and building materials. The bricks that comprise the walls are D’Hanis orange bricks that are missing a Common Brick Manufacturers Association (C.B.M.A) mark. They were likely made prior to 1921 when the C.B.M.A. mark began to be used by all association members (Anonymous 1921:417). The brick would have been made in molds at the D’Hanis Brick and Tile Company in D’Hanis, Texas (Gurcke 1987:100-112). No artifacts were collected from this feature.
The artifacts recovered from this quadrant include a single red Blumberg brick from the drainage system and a piece of the hub-assembly from one of the wheels imbedded in the concrete. The hub assembly is in good condition and free of rust. It has an identifying number on it but upon research nothing on the assembly could be found. Blumberg bricks were made locally at the Blumberg Brickyard in Seguin, Texas at the turn of the century. Production stopped in 1908 when the company was bought by Lone Star Manufacturing. (Anonymous 1908:168) This shows that the brick and the drainage system were constructed before 1908. These bricks would have been pressed in dry molds typical of the early 1900’s (Gurcke 1987:100-112). How or why the brick in the center drain became burned is not known.

**Summary and Recommendations**

Between May 17th and 24th 2010, CAR monitored demolition activities at the location of the future site of the South Flores parking garage expansion. The monitoring was conducted for Bexar County Infrastructure Services Department, as requested by the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office and the Texas Historical Commission. This work was undertaken due to the fact that the proposed project takes place on land owned by Bexar County, a political subdivision of the state, and brings the project under the jurisdiction of the Antiquities Code of Texas. Also, because the project occurs within the limits of the City of San Antonio, the project falls under the jurisdiction of the City of San Antonio Unified Development Code, Chapter 35. The principal oversight agency is the Archeology Division of the Texas Historical Commission. The background review suggested that significant mid 19th century deposits may be present in the northeast corner of the tract where a pre-1850’s residence once stood. It was the potential research significance of such deposits that required the need for archaeological monitoring.

During the demolition, four architectural features were encountered. Cultural features were recorded and quickly assessed in the field. None of the features pre-date 1850. The dry goods store foundation dates to circa-1912 as it is shown on the 1912-1954 Sanborn maps (see Figure 2-9). The adjoining room feature dates between 1883, the founding of D’Hanis Brick and Tile, and 1921 when C.B.M.A. maker’s marks became standard on bricks of all members. The red brick drainage system dates sometime between 1904, just after the closing of the sales stables, and 1908 when the Blumberg Brick Company was bought out by Lone Star Manufacturing (Anonymous 1908:168). The small foundation encountered adjacent to the drainage system was comprised of a more modern concrete foundation with thick horizontal rebar and its date of manufacture likely post-dates 1912. The primary focus of this project, the pre-1850 adobe structure, could not be located and was most likely destroyed by the building of the basement for the dry goods warehouse.

Previously disturbed soils were observed over the entire project area and no undisturbed deposits were
found. CAR recommends that construction activities will not impact any significant cultural deposits or features in this area and construction of the parking garage expansion can continue as scheduled. No evidence of prehistoric or Spanish Colonial artifacts or features was found.
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