



An Archaeological Assessment of Site 41BX318
at
Tesoro Ridge and Toepperwein Way Subdivisions

SUBMITTED TO
Tesoro Homes
San Antonio, Texas

by

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Introduction and Background

Abasolo Archaeological Consultants conducted an archaeological site assessment of 41BX318 located within the Tesoro Ridge and Toepperwein Way subdivisions, in San Antonio, Texas. This site assessment included a pedestrian inspection to determine the physical character and stratigraphic integrity of the cultural deposits. Site 41BX318 was recorded in 1976 by the late Harvey Smith working for the Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio. The site is described as prehistoric lithic resource quarry area in a plowed field and pasture. Smith did not recommend any further work at that time. However, the criteria for archaeological site assessments have changed with regards to what is regarded as a significant cultural resource eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, a reassessment of this site is in order.

The project area is in the rolling hills of the Blackland Prairie east of the Balcones Escarpment. This rolling prairie has long been used for agricultural purposes, particularly farming. The soils are characteristically the Houston series or gravely black clay (HuC, 3 to 5% slope). These Uvalde gravels are heavily laden with Edwards chert of varying quality, some of which is of very fine quality. This fine quality Edwards chert was a popular source of raw material to manufacturer chipped stone tools in prehistoric times. Lithic procurement or quarry sites are the most common archaeological sites found in this mostly upland rolling prairie landscape.

Survey Results

Field inspection at 41BX318 was carried out on April 30, 2008 by Shafer and Hester, following a Research Design sent earlier to Tesoro Homes. The inspection consisted of a pedestrian survey of that portion of 41BX318 that extends east of Judson Road and is bordered on the north by Lookout Road and on the east by the small upland ephemeral drainage that divides the property. The original site description noted that cultural material extended south of the creek as well, but we observed scant evidence east of the creek. The property was formally in cultivation and has since been overgrown by invading species of acacia, a variety of brush and occasional stands of yucca.

The survey conditions were good in the sense that preliminary clearing had taken place on the north side of the drainage, thus providing excellent opportunity for archaeological inspection. We did find evidence that the Uvalde gravels had been exploited, albeit not extensively, sometime in the prehistoric past. As noted above, the quality of chert in the gravels varied from very fine to very poor. Anyone selecting high quality chert for the manufacture of chipped stone tools would necessarily have to test numerous cobbles before finding one of the desired quality. Shafer tested numerous cobbles in the field to examine the quality of the chert and found that only one of about 20 cobbles was suitable for the manufacture of a projectile point. The archaeological evidence of this cobble testing is unequivocal in that numerous primary hard-hammer flakes were observed across the site area and extending along the upland slope on the northeastern portion of the property paralleling Lookout Road (Figure 2). Two chert cores also were observed (see Figure 3), but there was no evidence of further reduction into formal tools such as interior flakes or biface thinning flakes that would be expected.

Assessment

Site 41BX318 is very similar to other sites seen along the upland drainages Blackland Prairie such as Martinez, Salitrillo creeks, and Salado creeks observed by the authors (reports on files with the City Historic Preservation Office). These cherty gravels were intermittently and sporadically exploited prehistorically. While it is important to record sites such as 41BX318, they have little substantive research value other than knowing the extent of such patterns involved in prehistoric resource procurement. In short, Site 41BX318 does not contain deposits that would provide significant new information on prehistoric landscape use or settlement data. **No further archaeological work is recommended.**



Figure 3. Primary cortex flakes showing evidence of chert cobble testing sometime in prehistory.

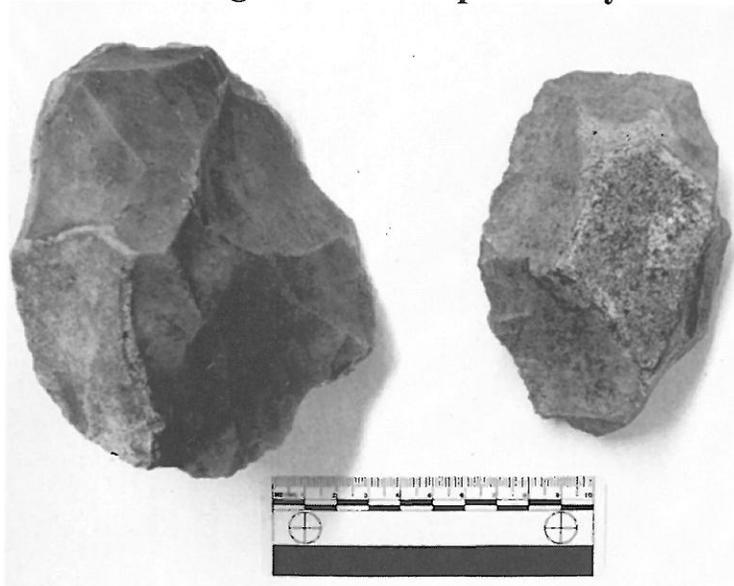


Figure 3. Chert cores from 41BX318 showing evidence of local quarry activity for stone tool production.