Archaeological Monitoring of Utilities Placement for OkTex Utility Construction Inc., San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

by
José E. Zapata

Texas Antiquities Permit No. 8450

Principal Investigator
Paul Shawn Marceaux

Prepared for:
OkTex Utility Construction Inc.
P.O. Box 254
Royse City, Texas 75189

Prepared by:
Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
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San Antonio, Texas 78249-1644
Technical Report, No. 72

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Abstract:

Archaeological monitoring of hand-excavated trenching was completed between May 31 and June 1, 2018, by staff of The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Center for Archaeological Research (CAR). This archaeological work was in response to a request from OkTex Utility Construction, Inc. (OkTex). Two-hundred-and-forty five linear meters (lm) of fiber optic cable was installed along Aurelia and Yucca streets in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The work was completed within the purview of the Antiquities Code of Texas, and required a Texas Antiquities Permit No. 8450. The Project Archaeologist was José Zapata, and Paul Shawn Marceaux, CAR Director, served as Principal Investigator.

As pointed out by the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation (COSA OHP), a 1921 document shows the Cavalry (sic) Cemetery within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). A review of the Bexar County Deed Records (BCDR) located a 1945 plat showing a 1.53-acre plot (BCDR 3347:337-339). In addition, the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas shows the footprint of a cemetery within the APE. Based on the indicated perimeters, the cemetery would have been located within the southwest quadrant of the APE. Local and State agencies were involved in the project, including the COSA OHP, the Texas Historical Commission (THC), and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The goal of the construction monitoring was to identify and document any prehistoric and/or historic archaeology that might be impacted by the trenching activities.

No artifacts or archaeological features were encountered, and no additional ground disturbance is required within this area of potential effect (APE). All field notes, maps, and photos have been prepared for permanent curation at the CAR in accordance with Texas Historical Commission (THC) guidelines.

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Acknowledgements:

Several individuals assisted in the completion of this project. We are grateful to William Keck of OkTex Construction for allowing us the opportunity to assist with this project. Lending archaeological oversight were Casey Hanson of the Texas Historical Commission Archeology Division and Matthew Elverson of the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation. Dr. Jessica Nowlin provided GPS, GIS, and mapping support, Dr. Kelly Harris edited this report, and Dr. Paul Shawn Marceaux served as Principal Investigator and oversaw the writing and production of the final report.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Center for Archeological Research (CAR) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) in response to a request from OkTex Utility Construction, Inc. (OkTex) on behalf of the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation (COSA OHP) conducted archival research and archaeological monitoring for construction activities associated with the installation of fiber optic cables. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is within a tract bordered by Martin Luther King Drive to the north, Hallie Street to the west, and IH-10 East from northeast to southwest in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The project is located on the San Antonio East USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle in (Figure 1-1).

Figure 1-1. APE shown on San Antonio East USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle map.

The utility installation was within the right-of-way (ROW) of the COSA property (Figure 1-2). The APE focused on the hand-excavated ingress and egress boring pits and the hand-excavation of a pit to accommodate a utility box. Since the APE was within the public ROW, the project fell under the COSA's Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634) and the Antiquities Code of Texas. Of some concern was a 1921 document that indicated the presence of the Cavalry (sic) Cemetery within the APE. A review of the Bexar County Deed Records (BCDR) located a 1945 plat showing a 1.53-acre plot with 28 known burials (BCDR 3347:337-339). The Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (THC 2018) does show the footprint of a cemetery within the APE. The Calvary Cemetery was located on the north side of Yucca Street and west of Amanda Street. Based on the indicated perimeters, the cemetery would have been located within the southwest quadrant of the APE.

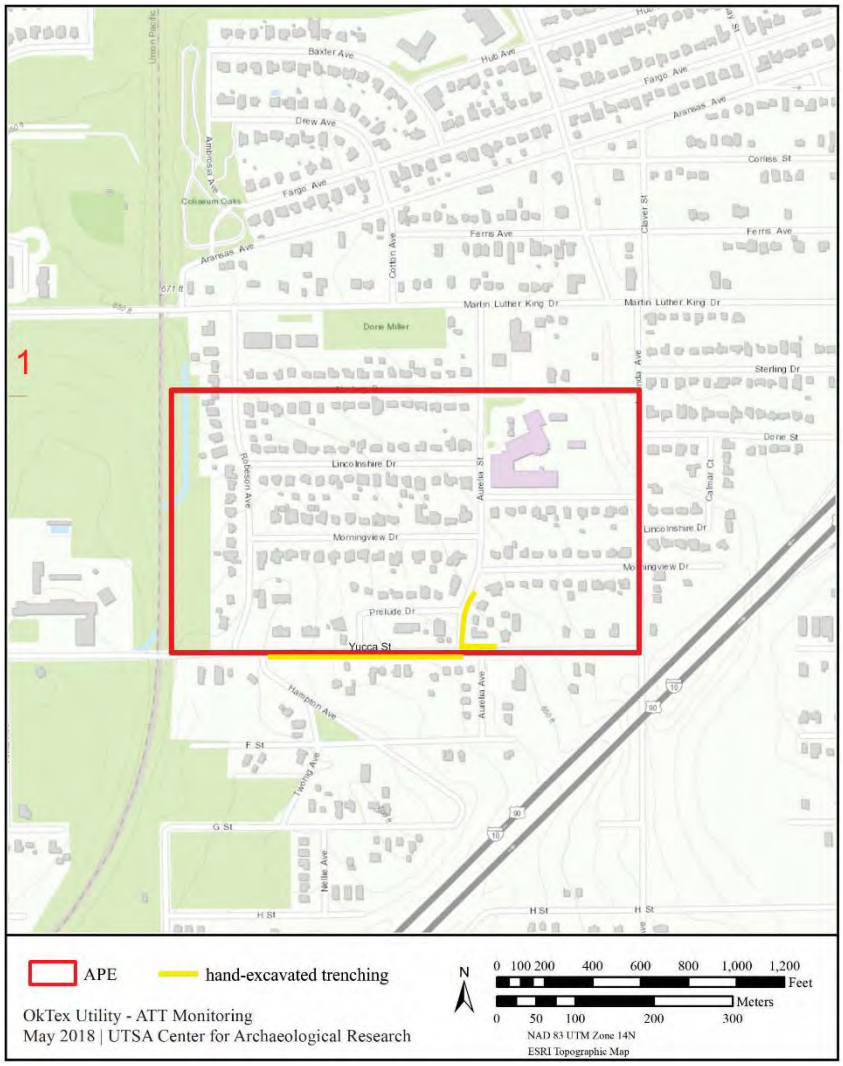

Figure 1-2. APE showing focus of archaeological monitoring, along Aurelia and Yucca streets.

The project was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 8450, with José Zapata serving as Project Archaeologist and Paul Shawn Marceaux, CAR Director, serving as Principal Investigator.

This report presents the results of the archival research and archaeological monitoring of the APE. The report consists of five chapters. This introduction is followed by Chapter 2, which provides a background of the project area and archival research. Chapter 3 reviews the field and lab methods used during the project, and Chapter 4 outlines the results. The project's conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 5.

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Chapter 2: Project Area Background

The APE is 4 km east of downtown San Antonio and 2 km west of Salado Creek. A search of the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (THC 2018) failed to locate any recorded sites within 500 m of the APE. However, three sites have been recorded within 1 km of the APE. Anne Fox and Bill Fawcett (Fox 1973) recorded a prehistoric site (41BX64) along Salado Creek and approximately 1 km southeast of the APE. In 2009, GTI Environmental, Inc. recorded the historic period Alsbury site (41BX1832) and the prehistoric DaFoste Park site (41BX1833) along Salado Creek and approximately 1 km northeast of the APE (Iruegas et al. 2010). In addition, the THC Sites Atlas (THC 2018) indicated the presence of a cemetery at the 500 block of Yucca Street, on the north side (Figure 2-1).

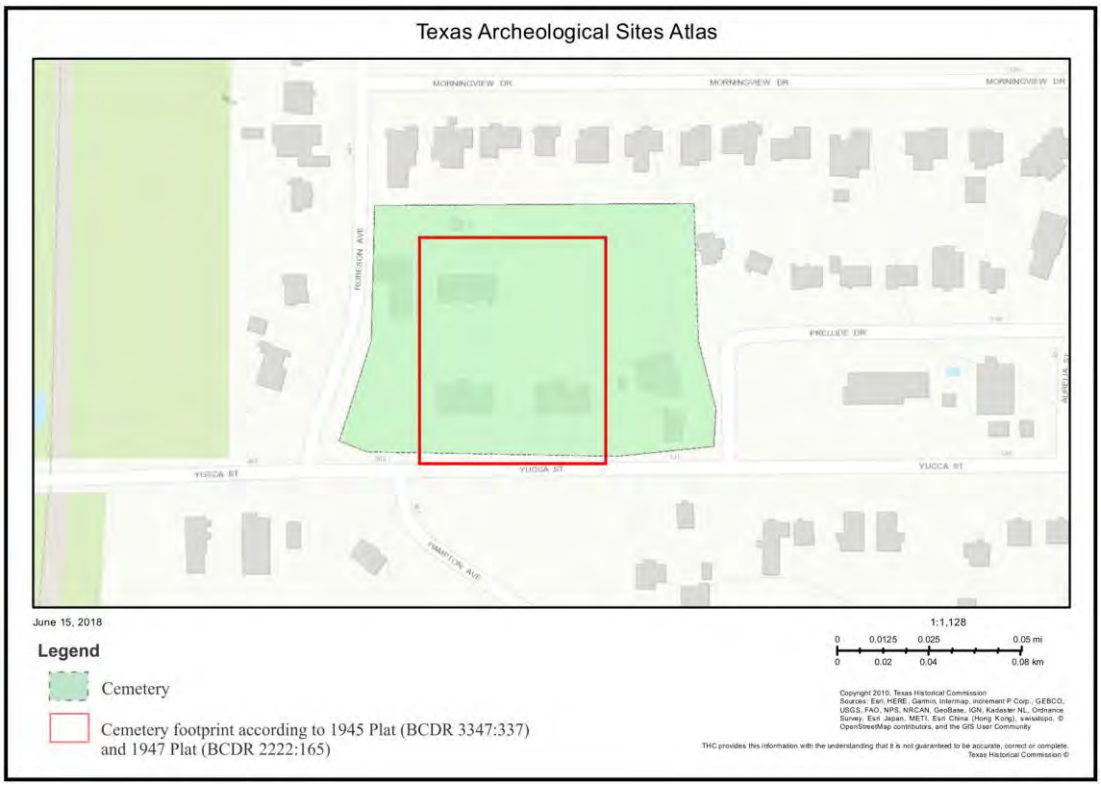

Figure 2-1. Texas Archeological Sites Atlas Map of APE.

The COSA OHP provided an undated plat that showed the Cavalry (sic) Cemetery within the APE (Figure 2-2). The partial reproduction includes a recent satellite image of the same area with an overlay of the cemetery footprint. As indicated, the aerial extent of the cemetery would have been vast and would have included the APE.

Figure 2-2. Partial reproduction of an undated plat, showing the Cavalry (sic) Cemetery and comparison of the cemetery footprint on a recent satellite image (Google Earth, 2 July 2018).

Archival Research

The APE is located in the Lincolnshire Subdivision, just east of downtown San Antonio. Development of this area began in the late 1800s. The earliest plat for this area, titled "Grand View Addition," is dated February 18, 1891 (BCDR 72:519-520). This early plat is presented in Figure 2-3 and includes an overlay of the Calvary Cemetery (not on the original plat) with street boundaries. Note that Amanda Street retained its name, while Nebraska, Concepcion, and Carter streets were renamed, Martin Luther King Drive, Clark Avenue, and Rigsby Avenue, respectively.

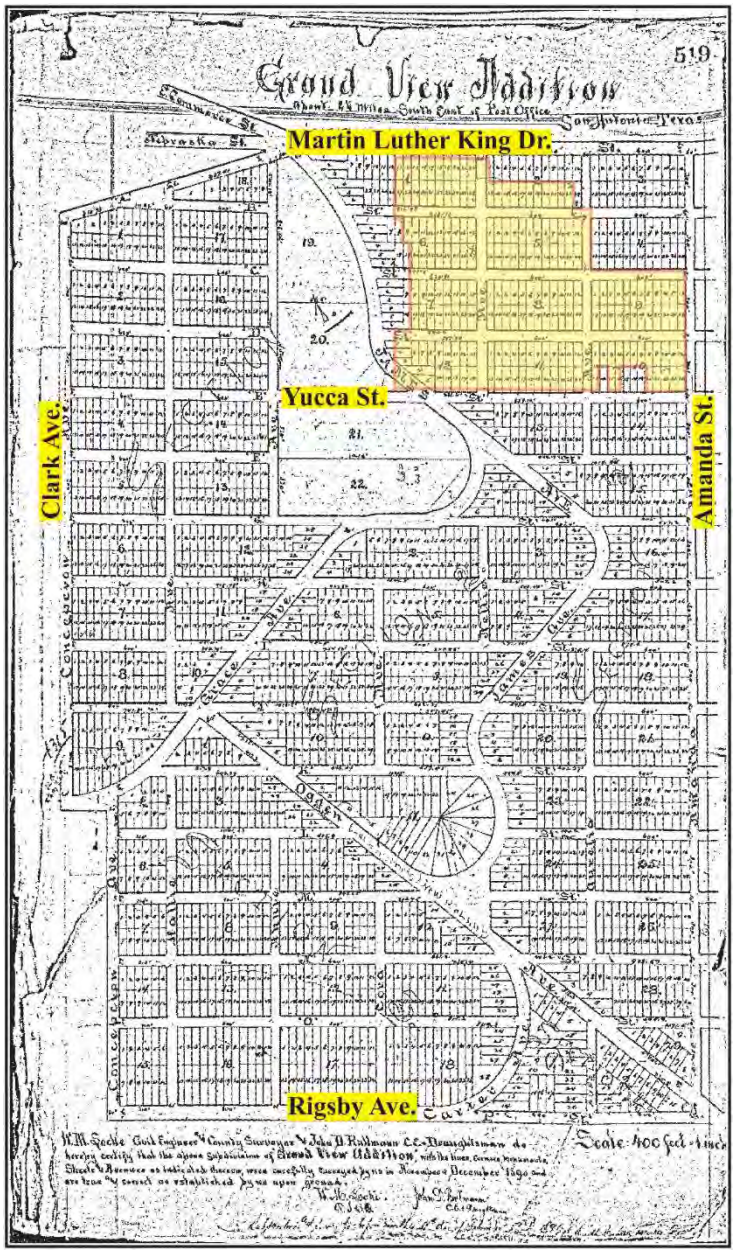

Figure 2-3. 1891 Grand View Addition Plat; added Calvary Cemetery footprint and current street names.

A review of the Bexar County Deed Records (BCDR) located a 1953 deed conveying the cemetery property to the Sisters Servants of the Holy Ghost and Mary Immaculate. The conveyance describes the property as "That certain enclosed burial tract comprising One and 2/3 Acres of land, fronting 222 feet on Yucca Street by depth 300 feet as per survey thereof made July, 1945…." (BCDR 3347:337). The deed includes a copy of the survey (Figure 2-4). The plat shows the Calvary Cemetery location along the north side of Yucca Street and west of Nellie Street.

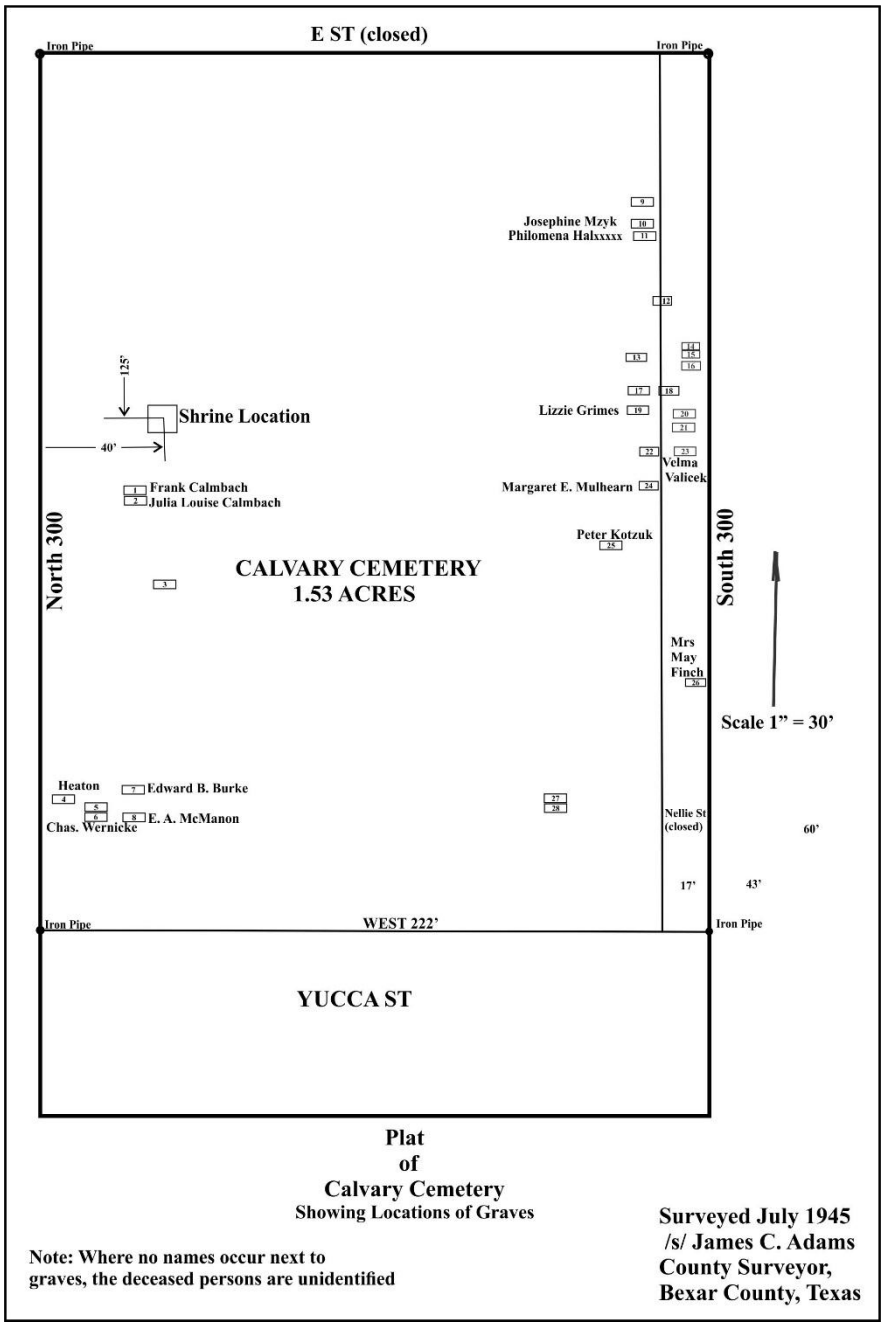

Figure 2-4. Reproduction of the 1945 Calvary Cemetery identifying the location of known burials (BCDR 3347:338-339).

The 1953 deed notes that "This conveyance is made subject to the rights of any owner of any particular burial plot and upon express condition that existing burials will remain undisturbed and the tract kept in good condition" (BCDR 3347:337).

On March 13, 1947, a plat for the Lincolnshire Subdivision was filed (BCDR 2222:165). This plat shows Block 12 Cemetery 1.56 AC on the northeast corner of Robeson Avenue and Yucca Street (Figure 2-5).

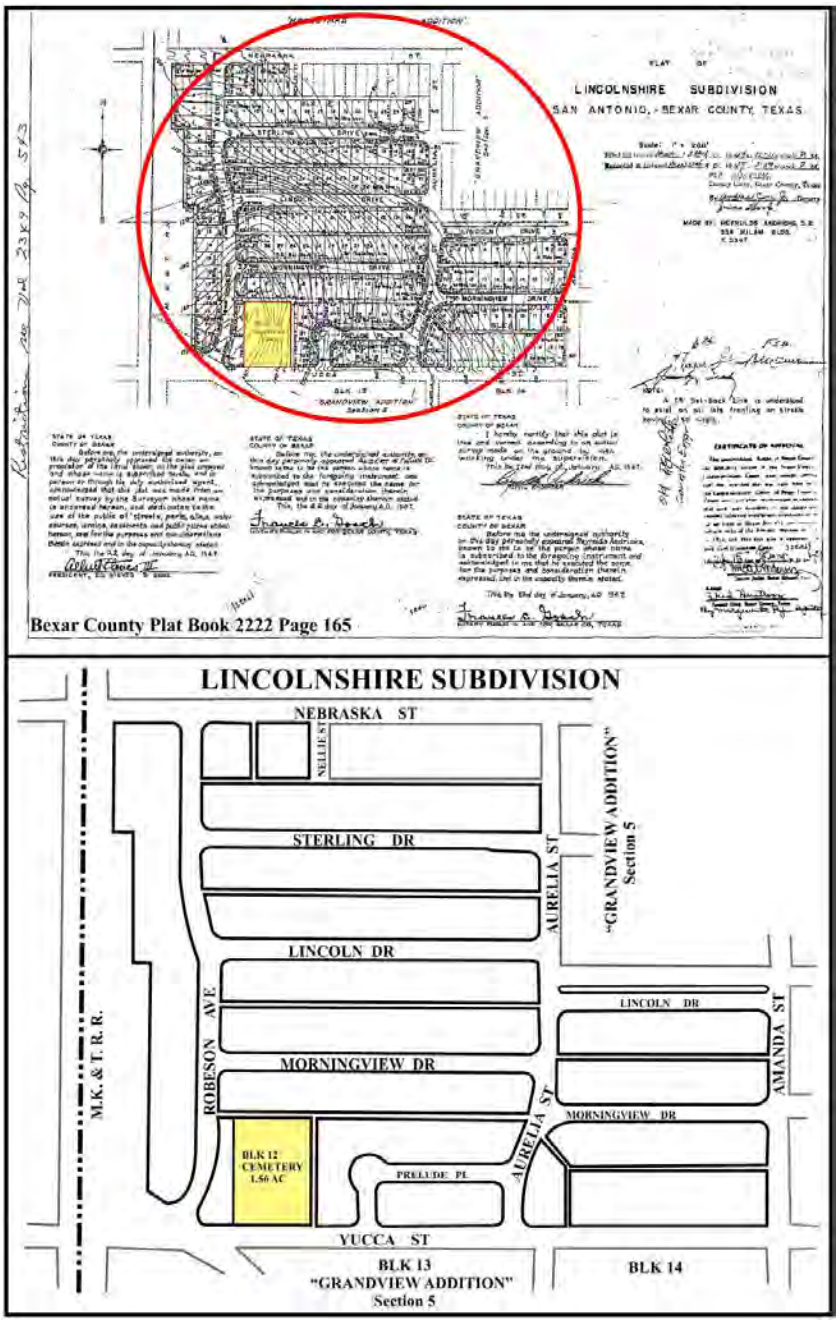

Figure 2-5. Reproduction of the 1947 Lincolnshire Subdivision Plat.

The Sisters Servants of the Holy Ghost and Mary Immaculate sold the property to the George Gervin Youth Center, Inc. on July 15, 1998. The deed describes the property as "That certain enclosed burial tract comprising One and 2/3 Acres of land, more or less, fronting 222 feet on Yucca Street by depth 300 feet. Being also described as P100 Block 5, New City Block 9555…as per survey thereof made July, 1945…" (BCDR 7728:1710-1713).

A search of the Bexar Appraisal District (BAD) records lists the property as the Gervin Subdivision (1.56 acres), New City Block (NCB) 9555, Block 5, Lot 30 (BAD 2018). This 1.56-acre tract is part of the George Gervin Youth Center (GYC) Alternative Living Center and is known as the Yucca Garden Apartments, located at 511 Yucca Street (GYC 2018). The following two figures identify the present-day location of what once was the Calvary Cemetery (Figure 2-6 and Figure 2-7).

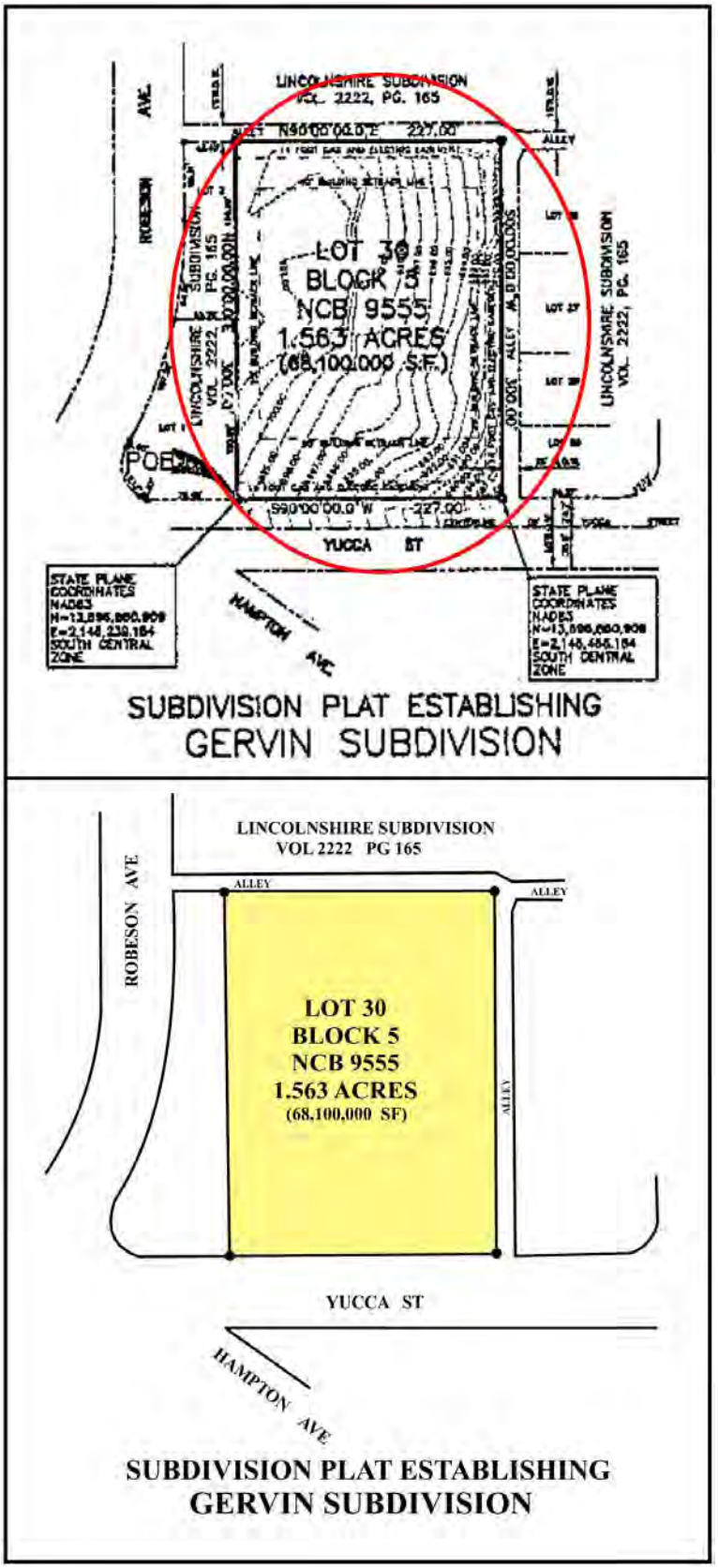

Figure 2-6. Reproduction of the Gervin Subdivision Plat.

Figure 2-7. Overlay of Calvary Cemetery footprint on satellite imagery of Gervin Subdivision (red outline; Google Earth, 2 July 2018).

Summary

A continued search of the COSA and Bexar County archives failed to locate any additional information regarding the cemetery and/or reinterment of the 28 known burials. The search was not pursued because the trenching activities did not include this area of the APE.

Chapter 3: Field and Curation Methods

The CAR reviewed literature, both primary and secondary sources, and documented resources within the project area prior to starting the project. CAR submitted a scope of work to the THC for the Texas Antiquities Permit application. The permit was to perform archaeological monitoring on below ground construction activities associated with the project that may impact archaeological resources within the APE. CAR staff also produced map overlays of the historic Calvary Cemetery on modern aerial maps in order to focus on the area's most likely to fall within the boundary of the cemetery.

The fieldwork for this archaeological project was completed over a two-day period. With only one exception, trenching was limited to within 60 cm below surface and trenches were hand-excavated. The exception was the excavation of a 1.8-m long, 1.8-m wide, and 1.2-m deep pit to accommodate a utility box. A staff archaeologist was on-site to monitor the work-in-progress. The hand-excavated trenches were located alongside sidewalks and between concrete-paved driveways. These were the ingress and egress trenches meant to accommodate the pneumatic boring missile. The monitor maintained a standard form, consisting of a daily log of activities. All activities observed were documented in this log and were supported by digital data, including GPS observations and photographs, where appropriate. A lab-based GIS/Illustrator supported the field monitor by downloading and managing Trimble GPS data. A photographic log was also maintained.

As summarized in the previous chapter, CAR staff consulted the COSA and Bexar County archives in an effort to develop a history of the Calvary Cemetery. A series of map overlays were produced, in order to determine the aerial extent of the cemetery.

Throughout the project, CAR staff maintained and organized field records and daily logs. All records generated during the project were prepared in accordance with Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 79 and THC requirements for State Held-in-Trust collections. Field forms were printed on acid-free paper and were completed with pencil. All field notes, forms, photographs, and drawings were placed in labeled archival folders. Digital photographs were printed on acid-free paper and placed in labeled archival-quality page protectors to prevent accidental smearing due to moisture.

No prehistoric or historic period artifacts or features were encountered. All project-related materials, including the final report, were permanently stored at the CAR's repository facility.

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Chapter 4: Results of the Investigation

Monitoring of Hand-excavated Trenches

Two-hundred-and-forty-five linear meters (lm) of fiber optic cable was installed along Aurelia and Yucca streets. Archaeological monitoring of this project was completed over a two-day period. The first day of monitoring occurred along the south side of Yucca Street, between Aurelia Street and Prelude Place, for 138 lm. To prepare the area for the pneumatic boring missile, a series of ingress and egress trenches were hand-excavated along the Yucca Street sidewalk and on either side of nine concrete driveways (Figure 4-1). The trenches were excavated to 60 cm below surface (cmbs) and were 30-cm wide and 1.8-m long.

Figure 4-1. Hand-excavated trenches along the 500 block of Yucca Street, south side (view southwest).

The observed strata were a mix of clay loams, gravelly clay loams, caliche gravel, and hard cobbly clays. The observed cultural material consisted of street refuse, such as an assortment of candy wrappers, plastic fragments, shards of clear and brown bottle glass, and ferrous metal. None of the material was collected.

The second day of archaeological monitoring occurred along the east side of Aurelia Street, between Morning View Drive and Yucca Street, for a total of 107 m. The work in this area progressed along the east side of Aurelia Street and moved south toward Yucca Street, turning the corner at Yucca Street, and then moving east along the north side of Yucca Street to the rear of 410 Aurelia Street (Figures 4-2 and 4-3). Trenching activity was similar to that completed the previous day, as a series of ingress and egress trenches were hand-excavated along the sidewalk and on either side of five driveways. The trenches in this area were excavated to 60 cmbs and were 30-cm wide and 1.8-m long.

Figure 4-2. Hand-excavated trenches along the 400 block of Aurelia Street, east side (view southeast).

Figure 4-3. Hand-excavated trenches along the north side of Yucca Street (view northeast).

The observed strata along Aurelia Street and the north side of Yucca Street were very different from that observed along the south side of Yucca Street the previous day. The strata consisted of a loamy, gravelly clay, with pockets of caliche base. Trenching along Aurelia Street failed to produce any cultural material. Street refuse, such as shards of clear and brown bottle glass and unidentifiable ferrous metal, was noted in the excavated soils along Yucca Street and included a modern trash midden with a concentration of window glass. None of this material was collected.

Archaeological monitoring during the second day included the hand-excavation of a 1.8-m long, 1.8-m wide, and 1.2-m deep pit to accommodate a utility box (Figure 4-4). Excavation in this area did unearth an assortment of modern trash, such as ferrous metal, shards of clear, brown, and aqua bottle glass, and window glass. None of this material was collected.

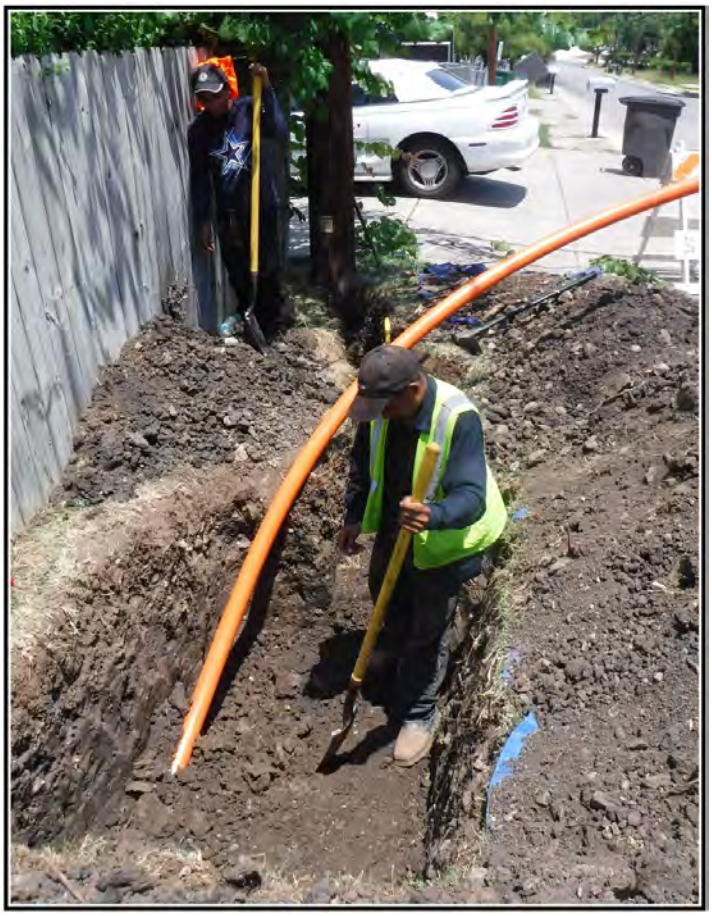

Figure 4-4. Hand-excavated utility box pit on north side of Yucca Street; note conduit being fed through horizontal borehole (view east).

Summary

Archaeological monitoring of hand-excavations within the APE failed to locate any prehistoric or historic period cultural material or any cultural features. In sum, the hand-excavation of ingress and egress trenches for the pneumatic boring process had no impact to the APE.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The hand-excavated trenches completed by OkTex Utility Construction, Inc. were not near the old cemetery. Ground disturbance along Yucca and Aurelia streets was minimal, and only modern trash was observed in the excavated soils. No artifacts or archaeological features were encountered, and no additional ground disturbance is required within this area of potential effect (APE).

The initial concern revolved around the location of the Calvary Cemetery because, as previously indicated, the original footprint was larger than the actual cemetery. The available records indicate that the 1.56-acre Calvary Cemetery was located where the Yucca Garden Apartments are now located (Lot 30, Block 5, NCB 9555). A cursory review of the available online records failed to locate any information indicating that the 28 burials were ever exhumed and reinterred. With this in mind, any future below-grade work within the public right-of-way of the Calvary Cemetery tract should be preceded by archaeology.

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