

**CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY OF THE 23-ACRE WESTERN DEVELOPMENT
(BIGLARI TRACT) PROJECT, SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS**

Prepared for

PAPE-DAWSON
555 East Ramsey
San Antonio, Texas 78216

Prepared by

Daniel S. Culotta and Laura I. Acuña

SWCA ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS
4407 Monterey Oaks Blvd.
Building 1, Suite 110
Austin, Texas 78749
www.swca.com

Principal Investigator

Kevin A. Miller

SWCA Project Number 15439-053-AUS
SWCA Cultural Resources Report No. 2009-131

April 28, 2009

ABSTRACT

SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resource survey of the 23-acre proposed Western Development (Biglari Tract) Project in northwest San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas on behalf of the Pape-Dawson of San Antonio, Texas. The project area is located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Interstate Highway (IH) 10 and Loop 1604 in northwestern San Antonio, approximately 10 miles from the city center. The current project involves the development of the 23-acre area into a commercial complex. The extent of the subsurface impacts is not currently known, but it is anticipated to include the construction of both above ground and subsurface infrastructure, roadways, and other impacts associated with the construction of buildings on the property. As a result, the Area of Potential Effects (APE) is the entire 23-acre project area. The cultural resource survey was performed to satisfy the requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office per the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634).

A thorough background archaeological literature and records search of the Western Development (Biglari Tract) project area determined that no previously recorded sites are within the project area and no surveys have been conducted within the project area. Three surveys have been conducted adjacent to the project area along the western boundary of IH 10. Additionally, 13 cultural resources and six previously conducted surveys are located within one mile of the project area.

SWCA's investigations consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey with shovel testing of undisturbed areas within the APE. Three shovel tests were excavated within project area and all were negative for cultural materials. The project area is situated within a rocky upland setting that consists of shallow soils, abundant gravels and cobbles, and exposed bedrock. Disturbances observed within the APE included vegetation clearing, construction related impacts such as grading and push piles, as well as two-track roads. No archaeological resources or historic properties were observed within the existing APE. Based on these results, no additional cultural resource investigations are recommended for the project area.

INTRODUCTION

SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resource survey of the 23-acre Western Development (Biglari Tract) project area in northwest San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas on behalf of Pape-Dawson of San Antonio Texas (Figure 1). Cultural resource investigations were conducted to satisfy the requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634). The entire 23 acres of the project area is the Area of Potential Effects (APE).

The archeological investigations included an intensive pedestrian archeological survey with shovel testing in areas of high archeological probability and deep soils. The goal of the work was to locate all prehistoric and historic archeological sites within the project area, establish vertical and horizontal site boundaries as appropriate, and provide sufficient information as to the significance recommendations. All work was conducted under the direction of Principal Investigator Kevin Miller and performed by Laura I. Acuña and Daniel Culotta.

DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA

The project area consists of the 23-acre Western Development (Biglari Tract), located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Interstate Highway (IH) 10 and Loop 1604 in northwestern San Antonio, approximately 10 miles from the city center (Figure 2). The project is bordered on the west by IH 10 and a two-track road to the south. The northern and eastern boundaries are not marked, although the northern boundary is apparent by the construction activities taking place on the adjacent tract. The current project involves the development of the 23-acre area into a

commercial complex. The extent of the subsurface impacts is not currently known, but it is anticipated to include the construction of both above ground and subsurface infrastructure, roadways, and other impacts associated with the construction of buildings.

The project location encompasses the shallow floodplain of Leon Creek within the Rio Grande Plain geographic region. This region is generally a lowland plain inclining gently southeastward to the Gulf of Mexico. The majority of the project area contains open to moderately dense stands of live oak, mesquite, cedar trees and underbrush, with open areas mainly consisting of grasses and cacti (Figure 3). Leon Creek flows through the project area, entering in the northeast portion of the APE and running south, until it bends east-southeast toward the southern end of the property. Leon Creek exits the project area near the southwest corner and at the time of survey, it was dry.

Geologically, the project area is mapped mostly within Cretaceous-age Edwards Limestone. These deposits consist of fine to coarse grained chert 300 to 500 feet thick (Fisher 1974). The areas around Leon Creek are mapped in Quaternary-age Fluvial terrace deposits that contain gravel, limestone, dolomite, and cherty (Fisher 1974).

The soils are mapped as mostly Crawford and Bexar stony soils (90%) with frequently flooded Trinity and Frio soils located along the Leon Creek floodplain (10%) (Taylor et al. 1962). The Crawford and Bexar soils are shallow to moderately deep, dark gray or reddish-brown stony clays on top of hard limestone. Trinity and Frio soils, frequently flooded are 3 to 5 feet deep with a clay loam to gravelly clay surface on top of clay with an occasional thin loamy stratum (Taylor et al. 1962).

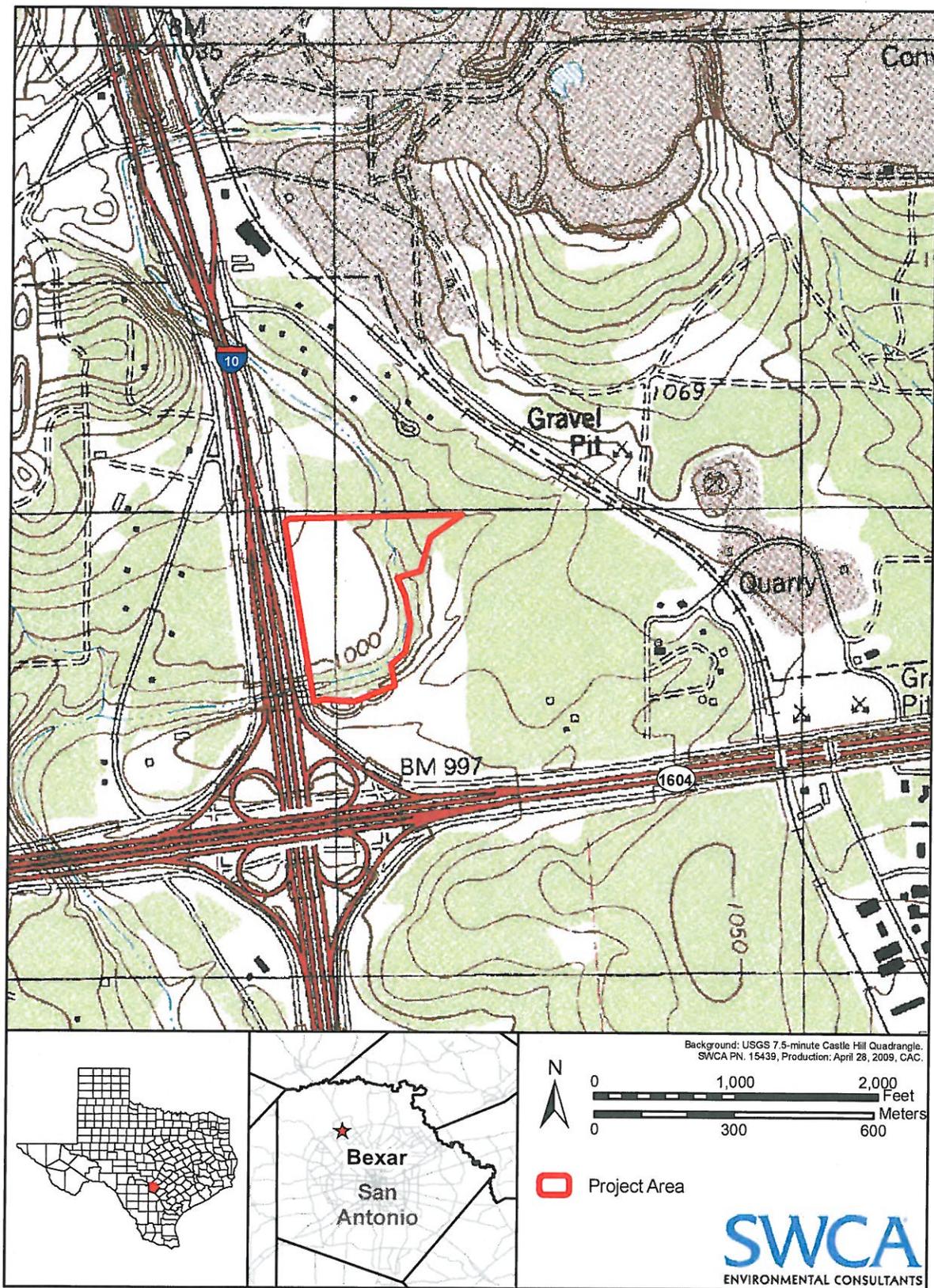


Figure 1. Project area map of the 23-acre Western Development (Biglari Tract) property, San Antonio, Texas.

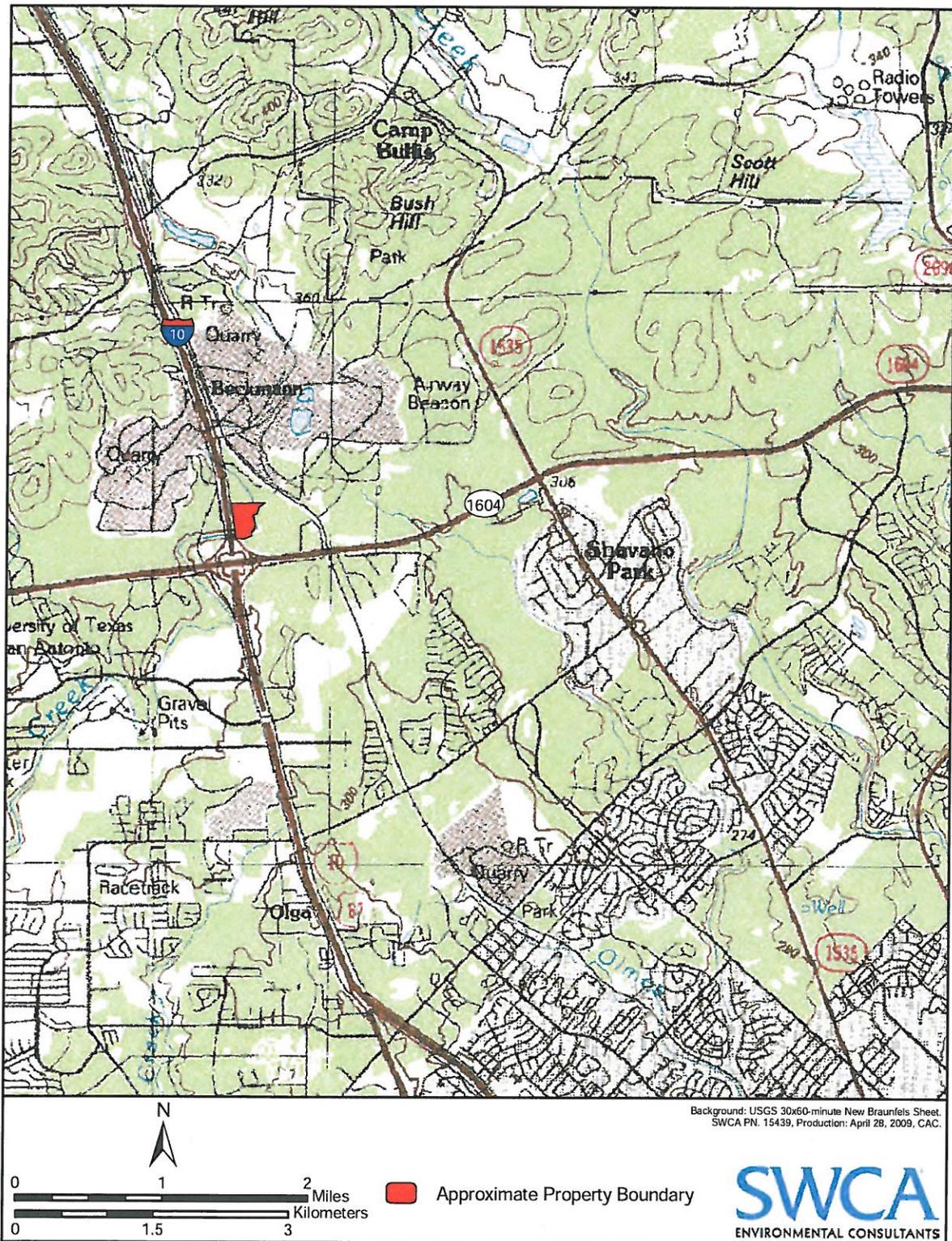


Figure 2. Project location map of the 23-acre Western Development (Biglari Tract) property, San Antonio, Texas.



Figure 3. Example of project area vegetation.

METHODS

BACKGROUND REVIEW

In 2009, SWCA conducted a cultural resource constraints analysis of the Western Development (Biglari Tract) in an effort to provide an initial document to be utilized by the Pape-Dawson and involved design consultants as a guide in planning the necessary cultural resource work and allow for the efficient management of the cultural resource compliance process in accordance with the San Antonio HPO. The cultural constraints analysis included a background archaeological and environmental literature and records search and brief recommendations on the type and scope of intensive archeological investigations deemed appropriate within the APE. This work was conducted in March of 2009 (Nielson 2009, *Cultural Resource Constraints Analysis of the 23-Acre Western Development (Biglari Tract) Property, San Antonio, Texas*).

For this research, an SWCA archaeologist searched site files, records, and maps files housed at the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory (TARL) and the THC Library. Additionally, an SWCA archaeologist searched the Texas Archaeological Sites Atlas (Atlas) online database for any previously recorded surveys and historic or prehistoric archaeological sites located in or near the project area. In addition to identifying previously recorded archaeological sites, the Atlas review included the following types of information: National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) properties, State Archaeological Landmarks (SALs), Official Texas Historical Markers (OTHMs), Registered Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), cemeteries, and local neighborhood surveys. In addition, for many projects, SWCA reviewed the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Texas Historic

Overlay, a compilation of historic maps and resources across Texas.

In addition to the cultural resource repositories, aerial and topographic maps were examined as well as United States Geological Survey (USGS) Soil Surveys and geologic maps to aid in assessing the level of previous disturbances from residential and commercial development, types of soils and geology, and any obvious standing structures. This task allowed SWCA to identify any areas that has potential to contain significant, undocumented archaeological sites.

FIELD METHODS

SWCA's investigations consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey augmented by subsurface inspection in the form of shovel tests. The survey was of sufficient intensity to determine the nature, extent, and, if possible, significance of any cultural resources located within the proposed project area. A team of two SWCA archaeologists walked the entire proposed project area, examining the ground surface and erosional profiles and exposures for cultural resources. Shovel tests were utilized in areas displaying possible alluvial soils, geology, and topography with minimal to no levels of disturbance.

The shovel tests were approximately 30 cm in diameter and excavated to culturally sterile deposits or impassible limestone, whichever came first. The matrix from each shovel test was screened through ¼-inch mesh, and the location of each excavation was plotted using a hand-held GPS receiver. Each shovel test was recorded on a standardized form to document the excavations.

RESULTS

BACKGROUND REVIEW

The background review of the constraints analysis determined that no previously recorded cultural resources are within or adjacent to the project area. The review also determined that three surveys lie adjacent to the project area along the western border, and six surveys have been previously conducted within one mile of the project area. Additionally 13 archeological sites lie within one mile of the project area. The three surveys adjacent to the project area along the western border were all conducted along IH 10, and one of these surveys, conducted on behalf of the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation (SDHPT) in April of 1990, identified the site 41BX889 within one mile of the project area.

The six previously conducted surveys that lie within one mile of the project area consist of two linear and four area surveys. These surveys identified seven archeological sites within one mile of the project area: 41BX39, 41BX51, 41BX52, 41BX1232, 41BX1624, 41BX1771, and 41BX1772. The remaining sites, 41BX38, 41BX42, 41BX43, 41BX44, and 41BX1604, have no specification for their mode of discovery.

Site 41BX1772, a historic farmstead identified in an area survey conducted by SWCA in April of 2008 on the Umbell Oaks property, has further archival research recommended. Future work recommended for other sites includes a scatter pattern analysis for site 41BX42, surface collections for sites 41BX43 and 41BX44, and testing for site 41BX52. No site form was available for site 41BX1604. None of the eight remaining sites have further work recommendations, and none of the sites have been recommended as eligible for designation as a State Archeological

Landmark (SAL) or for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

FIELD SURVEY

The field survey of the 23-acre Western Development Project determined that most of the APE has been disturbed by land clearing activities and grading. Most of these disturbances were concentrated around the perimeter of the project area and near Leon Creek in form of push piles and bladed areas. Two-track roads traversed the property in multiple areas, and several modern trash piles consisting of refuse and construction debris were scattered across the property (Figures 4 and 5). Ground surface visibility in the undisturbed areas of the property was 70 to 100 percent, with bedrock outcropping and surface boulders making up much of the surface of the APE.

Leon Creek is a relatively wide and shallow drainage with banks of negligible height and a narrow to moderately wide floodplain that grades upwards to terraces on both sides of the creek (Figure 6). A total of three shovel tests were excavated within the project area as the surface visibility was excellent and the soils extremely shallow (Table 1). The soils consisted primarily of rocky clay loam and shovel tests were terminated at bedrock. Two of the shovel tests were excavated to a depth of 5 cm and one to a depth of 15 cm. Additional shovel tests were deemed unnecessary due to the widespread bedrock exposures, steep slopes, and scattered disturbances. No cultural material was encountered on the surface or within the shovel tests excavated in the APE. In addition, no historic structures were observed within the project area.



Figure 4. Disturbances including a two-track road and modern trash piles.



Figure 5. Push pile consisting of modern construction materials.



Figure 6. Leon Creek.

Table 1. Shovel Test Data

Shovel Test #	Depth (cmbs)	Munsell	Soil Color	Soil Texture Description	Inclusions	Comments
1	0-15	10YR 4/3	Brown	Sandy loam	gravels and cobbles	No cultural material. The test was located in a drainage area just north of an undisturbed area. Soil was moist and loose from 0-10cmbs, the became compact with heavy gravel and cobble inclusions. The test was terminated due to compact and rocky soil.
2	0-3	10YR 4/3	Brown	Clay loam	gravels	No cultural material. The test was located in an undisturbed clear area. The soil was moist and loose with heavy gravel inclusions. The test was terminated due to rocky soil.
3	0-5	10YR 4/3	Brown	Clay loam	gravels	No cultural material. The test was located in a clear upland area overlooking the drainage. The soil was moist and compact with heavy gravel inclusions. The test was terminated due to rocky soil.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SWCA's intensive cultural resource survey of the Western Development (Biglari Tract) project in northwest San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas determined that the area does not contain any archaeological resources within the existing APE. Disturbances in association with the construction of IH 10, improvements to the property such as grading, blading, as well as frequent flooding have reduced the possibility of any intact archaeological deposits being located within the current APE. SWCA's intensive survey included three shovel tests to explore the subsurface of the project area. No cultural resources were observed in the shovel tests or on the surface. Additionally, no standing structures of historic age or other historic properties were identified within the project area.

In accordance with the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634), SWCA made a reasonable and good faith effort to identify historic properties within the project area. Based on the results of the intensive survey, the proposed activities within the project area will have no effect on significant cultural properties. No further cultural resource investigations are recommended within the current project area.

REFERENCES

Fisher, W. L.

1974 *Geologic Atlas of Texas, San Antonio Sheet*. Bureau of Economic Geology, the University of Texas at Austin.

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

Richmond

1962 *Soil Survey of Bexar County, Texas*. United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.