RESULTS OF A CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY OF THE
FCS FISCHER MDP PROJECT AREA, BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS

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ABSTRACT

SWCA, Inc. was contracted by Pape-Dawson Engineers, Inc. to conduct a cultural resources survey of the 86.73-acre FCS Fischer master development plan project area along Loop 1604 east of Redland Road in Bexar County, Texas. The tract is currently proposed for commercial development, and the work was done in support of the master development plan, which is subject to review by the City of San Antonio. SWCA’s investigations of the FCS Fischer tract included a background review and pedestrian survey.

The background review determined that the project area had never been surveyed for cultural resources. The pedestrian survey established that the entire project area is an upland setting with no potential for buried cultural resources. One well, with modern modifications, and a dilapidated cattle pen were discovered in the northeastern corner of the survey area, but were not recorded as a site given the condition and questionable age of the pen and the clearly modern modifications to the well. A large prehistoric lithic scatter, 41BX1625, was recorded in the eastern half of the project area. This site has little or no research value because it has no potential for buried deposits, lacks features, and has no diagnostic artifacts.

Based on the results of the survey, SWCA recommends that there are no significant cultural resources in the FCS Fischer tract. No additional archaeological investigations are warranted.
MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

PROJECT TITLE: Cultural Resources Survey of the FCS Fischer MDP Project Area, Bexar County, Texas.

SWCA PROJECT NUMBER: 10297-004-AUS.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The 86.73-acre FCS Fischer Master Development Plan project area is proposed for commercial development. SWCA’s project included a background literature review and intensive pedestrian survey with shovel testing of the project area. The goal of the field survey was to identify and assess any cultural resources that will be impacted by the proposed commercial residential development project.

LOCATION: The project area is in northern Bexar County along Loop 1604, east of US 281. The irregularly shaped tract is bordered on the north by Loop 1604, on the southwest by Redland Road, on the southeast by Jones Maltzberger Road, and on the east by private property. The project area appears on the Longhorn, Texas USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle.

NUMBER OF ACRES SURVEYED: 86.73 acres.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Brett A. Houk.

DATES OF WORK: September 20, 2005.

PURPOSE OF WORK: The client is complying with the City of San Antonio’s Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code.

NUMBER OF SITES: One (41BX1625).

ELIGIBILITY OF SITES: Site 41BX1625 is not significant and has no research value.
INTRODUCTION

SWCA was contracted by Pape-Dawson Engineers, Inc. to conduct a cultural resources survey of the 86.73-acre FCS Fischer tract along Loop 1604 east of Redland Road in Bexar County, Texas (Figure 1). The work was done in support of the FCS Fischer Master Development Plan (MDP), which is subject to review by the City of San Antonio. The tract is currently proposed for commercial development.

The investigations consisted of an archaeological background review followed by a surface pedestrian survey of the project area. The purposes of the investigation were to determine if the undertaking would adversely affect significant cultural resources and to assist in complying with the City of San Antonio’s Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code. Brett A. Houk, Principal Investigator, conducted the survey along with two SWCA archaeologists on September 20, 2005.

DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA

The FCS Fischer tract is an irregularly shaped 86.73-acre parcel of land in northern San Antonio. The project area is in northern Bexar County along Loop 1604, east of US 281. It is bordered on the north by Loop 1604, on the southwest by Redland Road, on the southeast by Jones Maltsberger Road, and on the east by private property.

The entire parcel occupies an upland setting, currently used as cattle pasture. The area is an oak-juniper woodland with numerous grassy clearings ranging in size from a few square meters to several acres. The vegetation includes live oak, juniper, mesquite, and persimmon, with an understory of grasses, cacti, Spanish dagger, agarita, acacia, and greenbrier.

Two small upland drainages flow into the project area—West Elm Creek and East Elm Creek—and meet to form Elm Creek near the center of the FCS Fischer tract. Elm Creek drains south, exiting the project area along Jones Maltsberger. Together, these creeks form a ‘Y-shaped’ drainage pattern in the project area. West Elm Creek was at one time impounded near the center of the property to create a large stock pond, but the pond and the creeks were all dry at the time of the survey. A high-voltage overhead powerline crosses the project area from north to south near the center of the tract.

GEOLGY

The project area is mapped as Cretaceous-age Edwards Limestone. These deposits contain abundant fine- to coarse-grained chert, along with fossils and shell fragments. The formation is 300 to 500 feet thick (Barnes 1983). A small sliver of the project area is mapped as Del Rio Clay, 60 to 120 feet thick. These deposits are calcareous and gypsiciferous with some thin lenticular beds of highly calcareous siltstone (Barnes 1983).

SOILS

Most of the project area is mapped as Crawford and Bexar stony soils. These soils consist of a very dark gray to dark reddish-brown noncalcareous clay surface layer, 8 to 9 inches thick (Taylor et al. 1962). The surface layer contains 10 to 40 percent chert and limestone fragments that vary in size from an inch to 24 inches in diameter. Few chert fragments or cherty limestone fragments occur in the subsurface layer. These stony clay soils are shallow to moderately deep over hard limestone (Taylor et al. 1962). These soils have a low potential to contain buried cultural resources with good integrity.
Figure 1. Project location map.
An area along the portion of the stream channels that cuts across the project area is mapped as Trinity and Frio soils, frequently flooded. These soils are flooded at least once a year and have poorly defined channels (Taylor et al. 1962). They occur as long irregularly shaped areas along the floodplains of small streams. These areas are subject to either thin deposition of sediments or scouring (Taylor et al. 1962). Trinity and Frio soils, because they are alluvial, have the potential to contain buried cultural resources with good integrity. However, during SWCA’s field survey of the project area, no alluvial soils were observed, suggesting the mapping data are inaccurate.

A small area at the intersection of Redland Road and Jones Maltsberger is mapped as Lewisville silty clay, 1 to 3 percent slopes. These soils consist of dark grayish brown surface layer 20 inches thick (Taylor et al. 1962). The subsoil is 17 inches thick and made up of a firm, limy brown clay. These soils occur on sloping areas that separate the uplands from level terraces and have a low to moderate potential to contain buried cultural resources with good integrity.

METHODS

BACKGROUND REVIEW

SWCA performed a cultural resource file records review to determine if the project area has been previously surveyed for cultural resources or if any archaeological sites have been recorded within or near the project area. To conduct this review, an SWCA archaeologist reviewed the Longhorn, Texas USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle maps at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) and the Texas Historical Commission (THC), and searched the THC’s Texas Archeological Site Atlas (Atlas) and site files at TARL. These sources provided information on the nature and location of previously conducted archaeological surveys, previously recorded cultural resource sites, locations of National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) properties, sites designated as State Archeological Landmarks (SALs), and historical markers. SWCA also examined the Soil Survey of Bexar County, Texas and the Geologic Atlas of Texas, San Antonio Sheet.

FIELD METHODS

The entire project area was walked by three archaeologists, spaced 15 m apart from one another on parallel survey transects. The crew did not excavate any shovel tests because the surface comprised shallow, rocky upland soils or exposed bedrock. No artifacts were collected, but artifact concentrations were noted and recorded. The process was documented with daily notes and photographs.

RESULTS

BACKGROUND REVIEW

The background literature review determined that the project area has not been previously surveyed for cultural resources, and no previously recorded sites are located within the project area location. However, three archaeological sites were recorded adjacent to the project area by previous survey investigations (41BX901, 41BX905, and 41BX1459). In addition, 18 archaeological sites are located within 1 mile of the project area. THC records indicate that nine cultural resource surveys have been conducted within 1 mile of the project area.

Three surveys have been conducted immediately adjacent to the project area. A survey of the parcel of land adjacent to the eastern end of the FCS Fischer Tract, north of Jones Maltsberger, was conducted in 2001. Site 41BX1459 was recorded during that survey, but no information on that site—other than its
trinomial number—or survey were available at TARL or on the Atlas.

Archaeologists from the Center of Archaeological Research at The University of Texas at San Antonio conducted a survey on the southern side of Jones Maltsberger Road on behalf of the San Antonio Northeast Independent School District. Records on the Atlas suggest this survey was initiated after construction disturbed archaeological deposits, which were recorded as 41BX901. The site is a prehistoric quarry site with a burned rock midden. Immediately east of 41BX905 is 41BX901, another quarry site recorded by C. K. Chandler, a THC Steward and local avocational archaeologist. The 41BX901 site form (Atlas) suggests that the two are part of one large site.

The third survey adjacent to the project area recorded on the Atlas was conducted prior to the expansion of Loop 1604. No sites were recorded during that survey near the project area.

Eighteen previously recorded archaeological sites are located within 1 mile of the project area. Of note, Elm Creek drains into Mud Creek south of the project area, and several Paleolithic projectile points have been found along the Mud Creek drainage (C.K. Chandler, personal communication 1997). A Clovis blade core was discovered in a neighborhood greenbelt less than 1 mile from the project area along Mud Creek (Houk et al. 1997).

**FIELD SURVEY**

The survey of the FCS Fischer tract determined that the entire project area occupies an upland setting with no potential for buried cultural resources. Even areas mapped in the *Soil Survey of Bexar County, Texas* as containing alluvial soils exhibited rocky upland soils (Figure 2). Exposed limestone bedrock was present in the West Elm Creek drainage.

West Elm Creek flows through the western third of the project area, which is steeply sloping and densely wooded. The rest of the parcel is less rugged and generally less densely wooded.

The survey documented two cultural resource properties—one possibly historic and one prehistoric. They are described below.

**WELL**

On the USGS map of the project area, a windmill is depicted in the northeastern corner of the project area (Figure 3). The survey determined that the windmill has been removed and replaced by an electric water pump on top of a well. The pump feeds a large above-ground cistern and small cattle trough. The cistern and pump are clearly modern features and, therefore, the well is not considered a historic property. Near the well is a dilapidated cattle pen of undetermined age. Even if the feature is over 50 years old, it is in poor condition and not worthy of preservation. A careful search of the area failed to locate any structural remains or other historic features. The well and associated features were not recorded as an archaeological site because of their apparent modern age.

**SITE 41BX1625**

The survey located and recorded one previously unknown prehistoric site, 41BX1625 (Figure 3). The site is a large lithic procurement area where Native Americans exploited natural chert cobbles that litter the eastern half of the FCS Fischer MDP project area. The types of cultural materials noted include chert cores, debitage, and two biface fragments. The site comprises a generally light scatter of such artifacts punctuated by small, denser concentrations of debris.

The western boundary of the site marks the approximate limit of the artifact scatter. The
Figure 2. Typical rocky upland setting and vegetation in project area.
Figure 3. Cultural resources in project area.
site may have once extended to the north and south, but those areas have been impacted by 
Loop 1604 and Jones Maltsberger Road, respectively. The site presumably extends to the 
east, beyond the limits of the project area.

The artifact scatter occupies the more level 
areas of the FCS Fischer tract, extending to 
both banks of East Elm Creek and Elm Creek. 
In the western half of the project area, the site 
occurs along a portion of the left bank of West 
Elm Creek. The density of cultural material is 
higher in the eastern half of the site.

Other than debris related to prehistoric quarrying activities, no other artifacts or features 
were discovered. The age of the site is, therefore, unknown. The site occupies an upland 
setting with no potential for buried components, and it may represent a palimpsest of 
cultural material spanning several thousand years of use. Such sites have little to no research potential because it is not possible to isolate components related to any specific time period. Therefore, the site is not considered significant, and SWCA recommends that no additional investigations are required.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SWCA’s investigations of the 86.73-acre FCS Fischer tract included a background review 
and pedestrian survey. The background review determined that the project area had never 
been surveyed for cultural resources, but that several recorded sites are nearby.

The pedestrian survey established that the entire project area is an upland setting with no 
potential for buried cultural resources. One well, with modern modifications, and a dilapidated cattle pen were discovered in the northeastern corner of the survey area, but were not recorded as a site given the condition and questionable age of the pen and the clearly modern modifications to the well.

A large prehistoric lithic scatter, 41BX1625, 
was recorded in the eastern half of the project 
area. This site has little or no research value 
because it has no potential for buried deposits, lacks features, and has no diagnostic artifacts.

Based on the results of the survey, SWCA recommends that there are no significant cultural resources in the FCS Fischer tract. No additional archaeological investigations are warranted.
REFERENCES

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