

**An Archaeological Survey
of the Wardlaw Tract, North San Antonio,
Bexar County, Texas**

SUBMITTED TO

**FROST GEOSCIENCES
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By

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Abstract

Abasolo Archaeological Consultants carried out a Phase I archaeology survey of the Wardlaw Duplex Tract in northern San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas near Leon Creek at Hausman Road. The property has been extensively modified to the extent that any cultural resources present would have been disturbed or destroyed. Introduced fill now covers over about 60% of the property; this fill was brought in order to bring the elevation up to standards for residential development. The remaining property has been disturbed by juniper removal and was inspected for traces of cultural resources along with the sewage corridor leading to Leon Creek. No cultural resources were found and no further archaeological work is recommended.

Introduction and Background

Abasolo Archaeological Consultants conducted a Phase I archaeological survey at the Wardlaw Duplex tract, northern San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. Work performed included a 100% pedestrian survey of the 10.5 acres. The work was carried out to insure that no archaeological or historical resources eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places are damaged or destroyed due to the planned construction. Similar studies in nearby areas include Shafer and Hester (2005, 2006).

The Wardlaw Duplex Tract property is east of Babcock Road along Hausman Road south and southeast of Loop 1604 (Figs. 1 and 2). It lies within the Balcones Canyonlands north San Antonio. The property is on a terrace (and terrace edge) of the Leon Creek watershed. Archaeologically this physiographic region is known for its high density of prehistoric archaeological sites that includes mounded accumulations of fire-cracked rock (called burned rock middens) resulting from the repeated activities of constructing and dismantling earth ovens, large campsites located along creek terraces near springs or along spring-fed streams, upland scatters of chipped stone and burned rock from hearths probably the result of short-term hunting or collecting camps, and vertical shaft cave cemeteries.

Soils and Setting

The 10.5 acre tract is on the north side of Hausman Road and just east of Leon Creek. Geologically, it falls in an area overlying Buda limestone and Graystone shale of the Washita group, dating to the late part of the Cretaceous period (Arnow 1959) (Fig. 3).

Present-day soil types (Taylor et al. 1991) nearest the creek are part of the Patrick Series, notably PaB (1-3 % slopes) (Fig. 4). These deposits are terraces 3 to 30 feet above the present channel. They are characterized by clay loam, gravelly clay loam, and silty clay. On the west part of the tract are Lewisville series soils, LvB (1-3 % slopes), that serve to

separate the terraces on the west from the uplands to the east. It is a dark grayish brown soil. Like the PaB soils, LvB can be cultivated for crops, both dryland and smaller plots usually requiring irrigation.

Archaeological Background

Chronological Overview

The Wardlaw Duplex Tract lies within an area of northern Bexar County where a series of major prehistoric sites have been excavated and published. These sites span most of the 13,000-year chronology of the region's human presence (Turner and Hester 1993). About 1.75 miles to the northeast, just south of FM 1604 is the Pavo Real site (41BX52; Collins et al. 2003). This site yielded abundant chipped stone remains linked to the Paleoindian period. Occupation of that site began around 13,000 years ago during the end of the Pleistocene (Ice Age), continuing intermittently for the next 1000-2000 years. The Paleoindian period ended in a time of improving climate, around 8800 years ago. A good example of the later Paleoindian cultures has been found less than a mile from the survey area, at site 41BX47 on the east side of Leon Creek (Tennis 1996). This site also provides an excellent example of Archaic occupations. Lasting about 7000 years, the Archaic peoples were hunters and gatherers who exploited the resources of an essentially modern Central Texas environment. Plant resources, such as the bulbs of sotol and other plants, were often processed in burned rock middens, earth ovens of the sort also seen at 41BX47. Another of the major resources was chert (flint) that weathered out of limestone of the Edwards formation in northern Bexar County. Archaic sites are marked by large numbers of projectile points (used on spears thrown with the *atlatl* or spear thrower; Tennis 1996) and other tools, along with much flake debris resulting from their manufacture. Around 1300 years ago, changes began to appear in the long Archaic lifeway. Most recognizable is the introduction of the bow and arrow, with the tiny points notably distinct from the larger spear points of Archaic times. This era, lasting until the arrival of the Spanish in the 17th century, is known as the Late Prehistoric. The Historic archaeological record in the area is best represented by a series of ranch and farm structures documented at Camp Bullis, north of Hausman Road Duplex Tract. These include several houses built in the mid- to late-19th century, some constructed by early German immigrants (Gerstle et al., 1978).

Sites Near the Hausman Road Tract

Archaeology in the Leon Creek watershed is known largely from an early 1970s survey by Willam Fawcett and Paul McGuff (Texas Archeological Site Atlas, Texas Historical Commission). Three of their sites are in the general vicinity, 41BX40, 41BX47, and 41BX50. When first recorded, none of the sites revealed any significant traits. Nearly 40 years later, this is probably still true for 41BX40 and 41BX50. But, work by The University of Texas at San Antonio at the locale led to the discovery of major cultural

deposits. As noted above, Tennis (1996) has published the excavations at 41BX47 northeast of the Hausman Road Tract. With occupations that range from at least 7000 B.C. to 1000 B. C., it is an example of the kind of significant site sometimes found in the terraces of Leon Creek.

Research Design

The research design called for the following tasks to be completed:

1. A pedestrian survey of the high probability areas across the entire 10.5 acres. Any archeological material encountered would be located using hand-held GPS units and plotted on the project map.
2. Backhoe testing would be performed only if necessary to examine for and assess any buried components that might be encountered. This is the quickest and most efficient method of testing for subsurface archaeological deposits.
3. Diagnostic artifacts encountered during the course of the survey or testing were to be digitally photographed for recording. A no collection policy was followed unless unusual finds are encountered.
4. A formal report is to be prepared for Frost GeoSciences and copies will be provided to the City of San Antonio.

Survey Results

The field survey discovered that since the aerial image was made the property has undergone extensive changes. The aerial view of the property was taken some time in the past and is no longer applicable. The reason is that the integrity of at least 60% of the property on the west side toward Leon Creek has been compromised by the introduction of fill to bring the elevation up to standards for residential dwellings (Figs. 5, 6, and 7). This fill is up to five feet thick (Fig.7) on the west and is essentially level across the property to about midway to the eastern limits. We inspected the perimeter of the property along the fill boundaries and found no evidence of prehistoric cultural material. The portion of the property that has not been covered with fill had been bulldozed in the past to remove the juniper, and is now covered with relatively young growths of mesquite (Fig. 8). The ground cover was not so thick, however, that we could not inspect the surface. Again, no signs of prehistoric sites were found. Since the juniper had been removed, the surface here was disturbed as well, but not to the extent that if an archaeological site was present, some integrity may have been preserved. We also noted that the corridor for the sewage line had also been disturbed to some extent by bulldozing; an old fence line and road that runs about north-south near the terrace edge above the creek also shows quite a bit of dumping of construction debris.

Summary and Recommendations

The Wardlaw Duplex Tract has been extensively modified to bring it up to standards for residential development. This effort involved the introduction of fill over the western half of the property (Fig. 9). Because of this modification, surface inspection of the 10.5 acres was not possible. A through inspection of the remaining property, the periphery, and sewage corridor leading to Leon Creek, however, failed to detect any traces of prehistoric occupation. The historic materials observed were recent and attributable to the dumping of trash. If intact cultural deposits exist on the property—which is doubtful because no signs of prehistoric use were detected—they are now buried beneath the thick layer of introduced fill. **No further work is recommended for this property.**

References Cited

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Figures

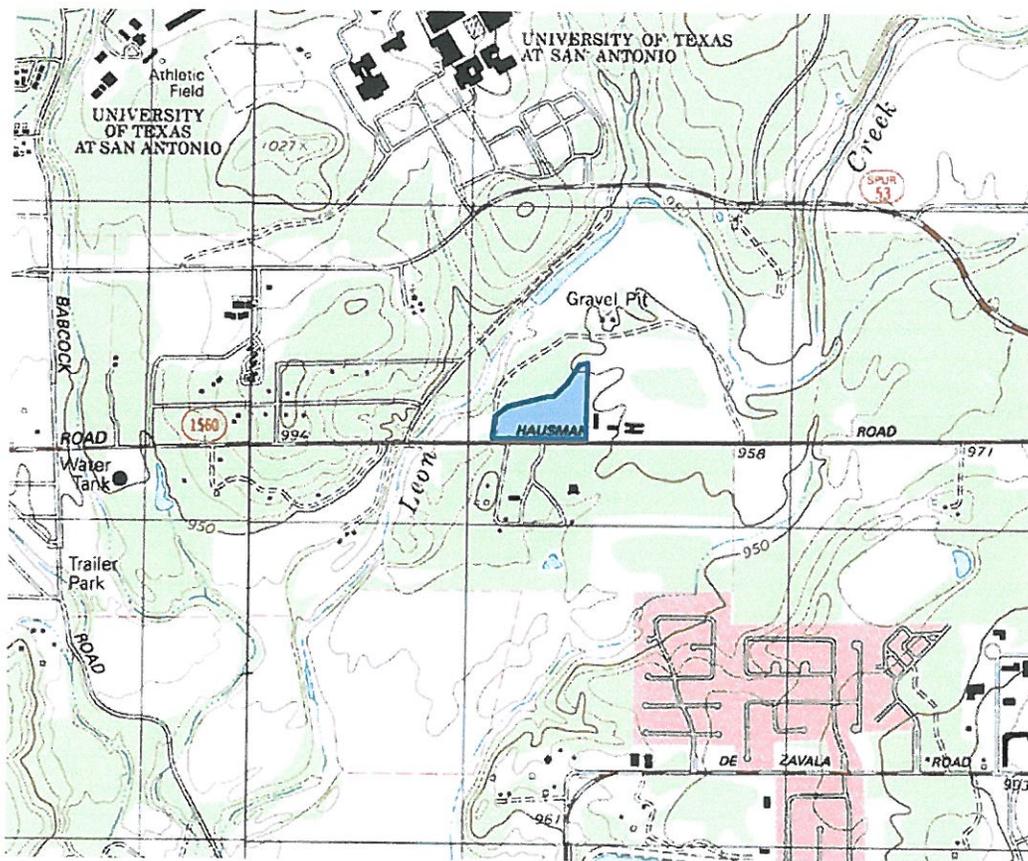


Figure 1. Topographic map of the project area. Map provided by Frost GeoSciences.

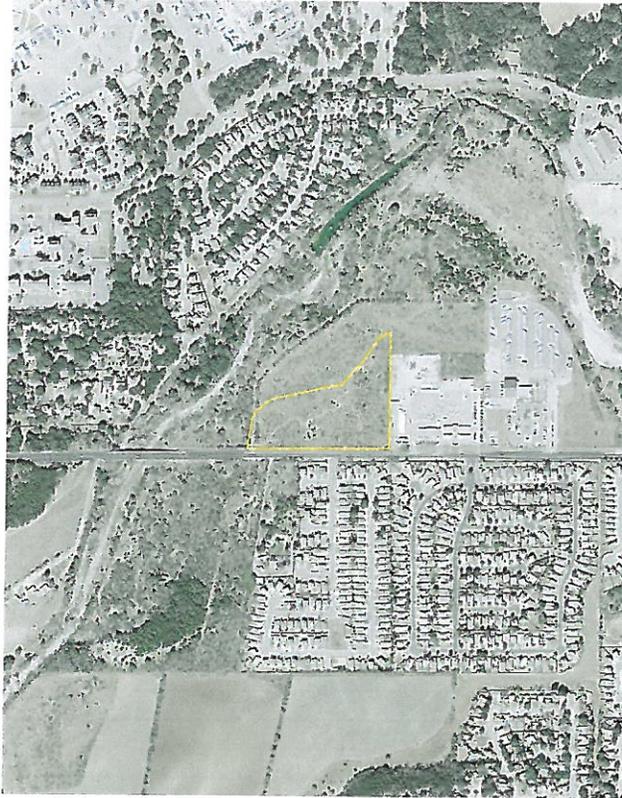


Figure 2. Aerial view of the project area.

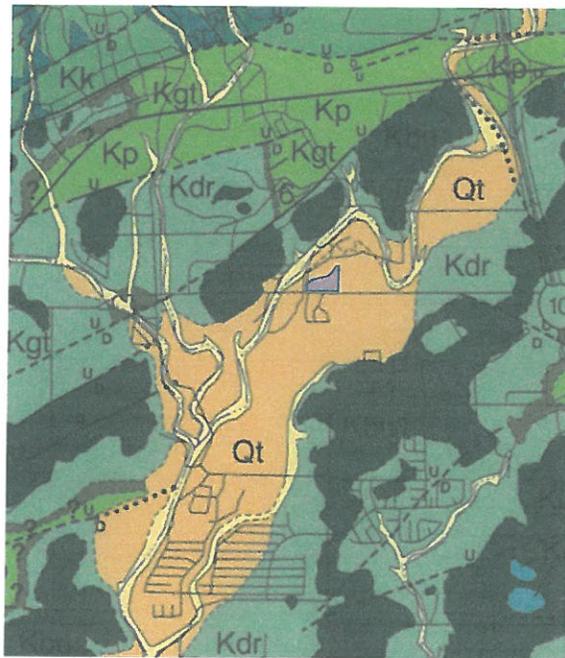


Figure 3. Geology map of the project area. Map provided by Frost GeoSciences.

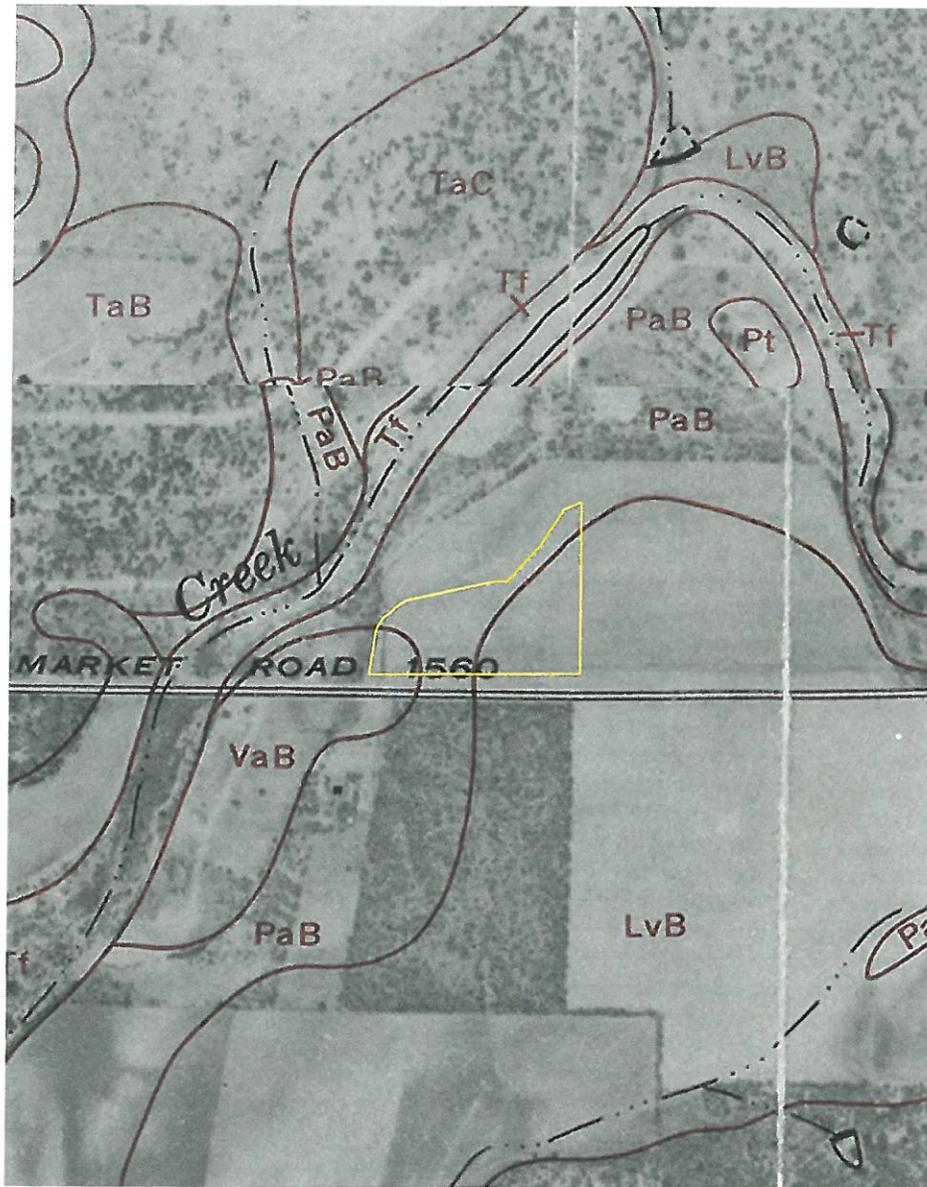


Figure 4. Soils map of the project area. Map provided by Frost Geosciences.



Figure 5. West end of project area showing extent of introduced fill.



Figure 6. Central portion of the project area showing introduced fill.



Figure 7. Western margin of the survey area showing depth of introduced fill.



Figure 8. Eastern portion of project area showing juniper cleared area being reclaimed by mesquite.

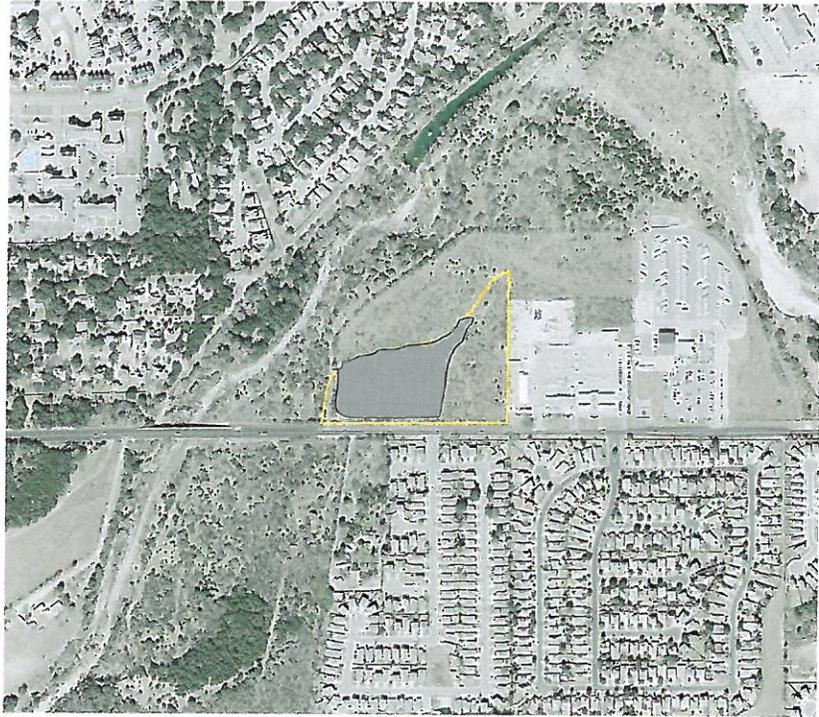


Figure 9. Approximate area of introduced fill covering the original ground surface.