

Limited Testing for the Installation of Fiber Optic Cable from Gallagher Parking Lot to the Alamo Complex, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

by
José E. Zapata



Texas Antiquities Permit No. 7428

Principal Investigator
Paul Shawn Marceaux

Prepared for:
Texas General Land Office
Alamo Division
P.O. Box 12873
Austin, Texas 78711-2873



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Prepared by:
Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
One UTSA Circle
San Antonio, Texas 78249
Technical Report, No. 68

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Abstract:

The Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) conducted limited testing associated with the planned installation of fiber optic cables from the Gallagher parking lot to the Alamo Complex. The parking lot is located to the northeast and directly across the street from the Alamo Complex. The fieldwork was completed in September 2015, pursuant to Texas Antiquities Permit No. 7428. Testing involved the excavation of a 3-x-3 foot (ft.; 0.91-x-0.91 meter [m]) unit to a depth of 36 inches (in.; 91.4 centimeters [cm]). With the exception of faunal remains, only temporally diagnostic artifacts were collected and curated.

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Table of Contents:

Abstract	i
List of Figures	v
List of Tables	vii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Site History.....	3
Chapter 3: Field and Laboratory Methods	6
Chapter 4: Results of Field Investigation.....	9
Unit Excavation.....	10
Chapter 5: Summary and Recommendations.....	15
References Cited	17

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List of Figures:

Figure 1-1. Area of potential effect (APE) on the San Antonio East 7.5-minute USGS quadrangle map....	1
Figure 1-2. Plans for the installation of fiber optic cables	2
Figure 2-1. Alamo Plat of 1849 by F. Giraud (enlarged in 1885) with approximate location of the Gallagher lot (highlighted in yellow), right of center (City of San Antonio Municipal Archives, Survey Book H:114).....	3
Figure 2-2. Gallagher site development between 1885 and 1912, based on 1885, 1888, and 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Note that the Alamo Acequia had been built over by 1912.....	5
Figure 4-1. Gallagher Building and Unit 1 at center.....	9
Figure 4-2. Gallagher Building and Unit 1 at center; inset above highlights building and unit on an 1888 Sanborn Map	10
Figure 4-3. Unit 1 (highlighted in yellow) location in relation to San Antonio Transfer carriage shed	12
Figure 4-4. Wall profile of test unit	13

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List of Tables:

Table 4-1. Unit 1 Artifact Inventory	11
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Center for Archaeological Research (CAR), under contract with the Texas General Land Office (GLO), conducted limited test excavations associated with the proposed installation of a fiber optic cable from the Gallagher parking lot to the Alamo Complex in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas (Figure 1-1).

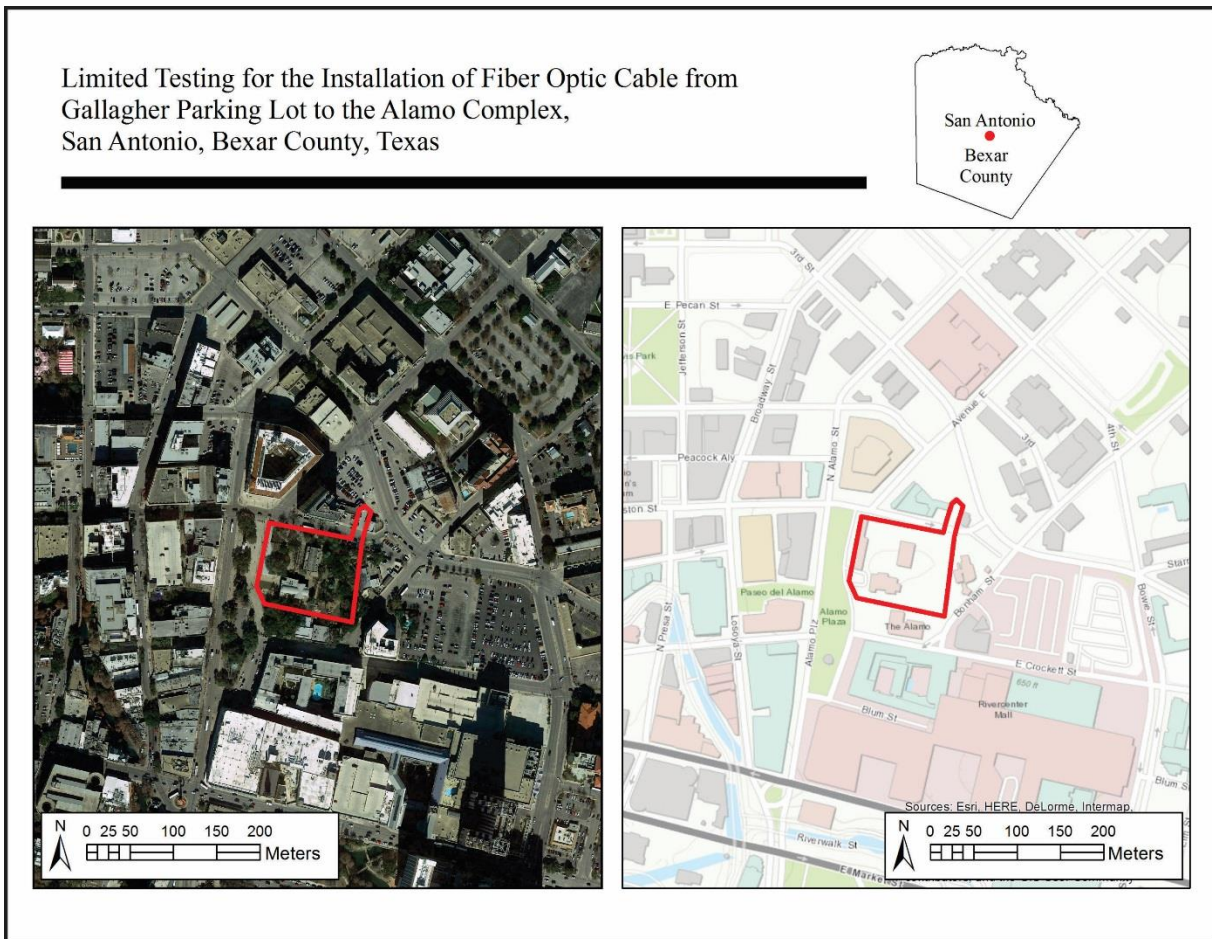


Figure 1-1. Area of potential effect (APE) on the San Antonio East 7.5-minute USGS quadrangle map.

The lot, outside the Alamo Complex, lies well within the farmland of Mission San Antonio de Valero. The Alamo (41BX6), a site that originally functioned as the third and final location of Mission San Antonio de Valero, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a State Antiquities Landmark, and is a contributing structure of the City of San Antonio's Alamo Plaza Historic District. The site was recently designated a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Therefore, any improvements to the facilities that result in ground disturbing activities need to be assessed and monitored to ensure that they do not negatively impact significant cultural deposits.

The fiber optic cable was to be installed below the grade in a conduit and stretched from the employee parking lot, in an area immediately west of the Gallagher Building, across and under Houston Street, and into the Alamo Complex. The project plan and cable routing is presented in Figure 1-2. CAR staff proposed to excavate a 3-x-3 foot (ft.; 0.91-x-0.91 meter [m]) unit to a depth of 36 inches (in.; 91.4 centimeters [cm]) to accommodate a bore entry pit. Archaeologists also planned to monitor the parking lot trenching. CAR staff did not need to monitor the proposed cable install within the Alamo Complex, since planned trenching was limited to no more than 12 in. (30.5 cm) below the surface.

Due to unforeseen events, and after more than a year of delays, the GLO decided to suspend the planned installation of fiber optics. In sum, only the unit excavation was completed.

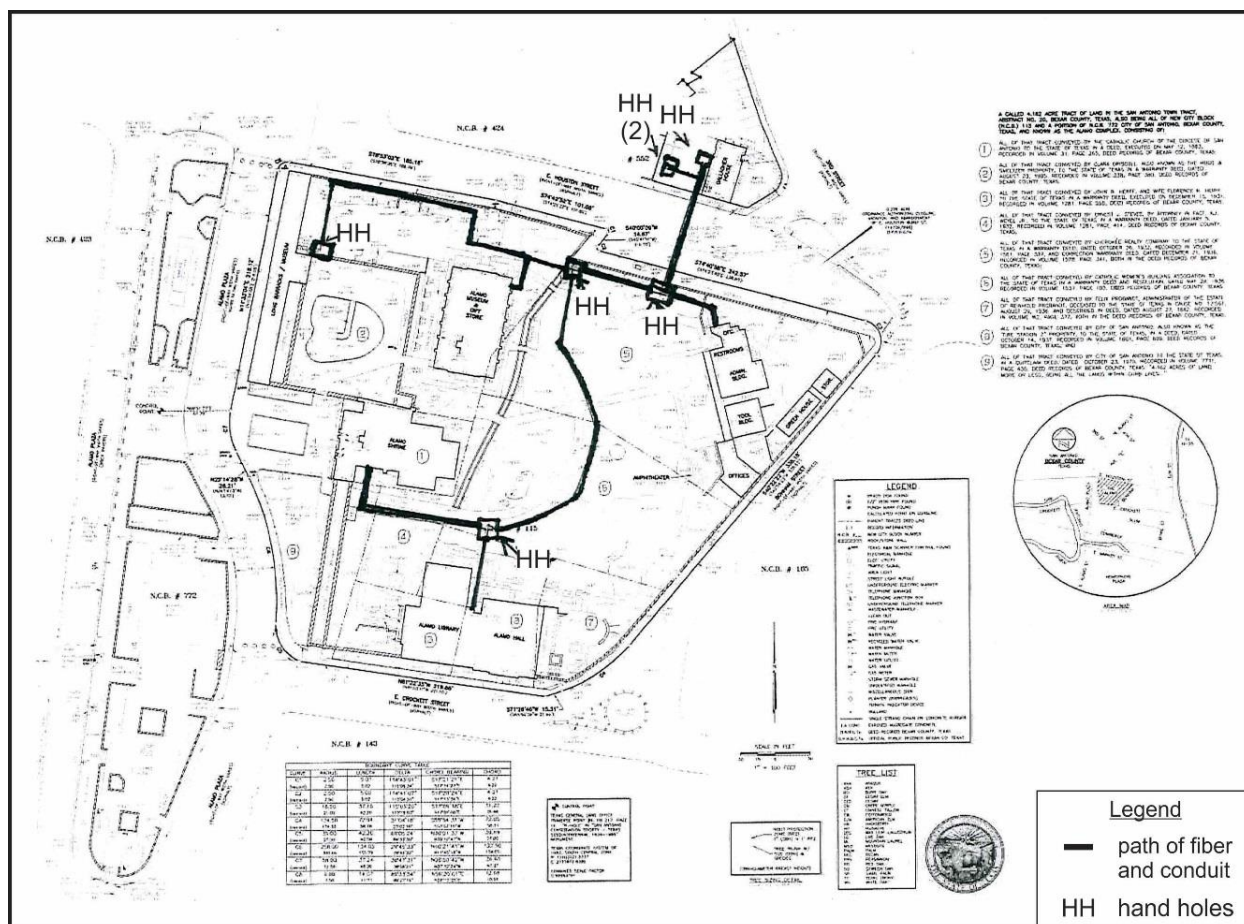


Figure 1-2. Plans for the installation of fiber optic cables.

Chapter 2: Site History

The Gallagher site is located in downtown San Antonio at 733 East Houston Street. The legal description of the site's location is New City Block (NCB) 552, Lots A-6 and A-8. As previously noted, this parcel of land was once within the Mission San Antonio de Valero footprint (Figure 2-1). I. Wayne Cox (1990) of CAR completed an earlier study of this lot. The Cox (1990) report summarizes the archival research, monitoring, and trenching activities conducted in this area between 1987 and 1988. The archival research was in anticipation of the demolition of two structures adjacent to and east of the Gallagher Building. Another part of the study called for limited testing of the Gallagher parking lot in search of the Acequia Madre (41BX8).



Figure 2-1. Alamo Plat of 1849 by F. Giraud with approximate location of the Gallagher lot (highlighted in yellow), right of center (Giraud 1849).

The archival research completed by Cox (1990) found that the Gallagher lot was part of a parcel granted to Diego Perez in 1818, 25 years after the mission was secularized. The property, described as being adjacent to and east of the Acequia Madre, changed hands several times before it was inherited by Edward J. Gallagher in 1878 (Cox 1990:5). The Gallagher Building at 733 East Houston was constructed in 1887:

Ed. J. Gallagher and Wife: Contract and Builders Lien with S.A.R.E.B. and L. Association
[San Antonio Real Estate, Building and Loan Association]

...that said association hereby agrees to furnish a dwelling house to wit: a two story brick house now commenced... in the City of San Antonio...to wit: Beginning at the East in SE corner of a large triangular lot...on the North side of Houston Street....

...Said building is to be built in substantial accordance with the plans and specifications made by Wm. Beattie for said E J Gallagher, the specifications being annexed to a contract made between said association and Chas. G. Boelhauwe in reference to same work, and both plans and specifications, aforesaid being considered part and parcel hereof. Said association is to furnish all labor and materials necessary and proper to complete said improvements, and to erect same in a good workmanlike manner, from the present stage of the works, for the price of two thousand six hundred and forty Dollars...27th day of June A.D. 1887 [Bexar County Clerk (BCC) Mechanics Liens Book C:502-504].

The development of the site between 1885 and 1912 is demonstrated in Figure 2-2. The building is shown on the 1888 Sanborn Map at 629 East Houston and on the 1912 Sanborn Map at 729 East Houston. The address has since changed to 733 East Houston. Gallagher used the building as his home and business until he relocated to Cherry Street in 1895 (Cox 1990:5). The building was used as rental property and changed hands several more times before being purchased by the City of San Antonio in 1987, then by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas in 1991, and finally deeded to the State of Texas in 1995 (BCC OPR Book 6570:925).

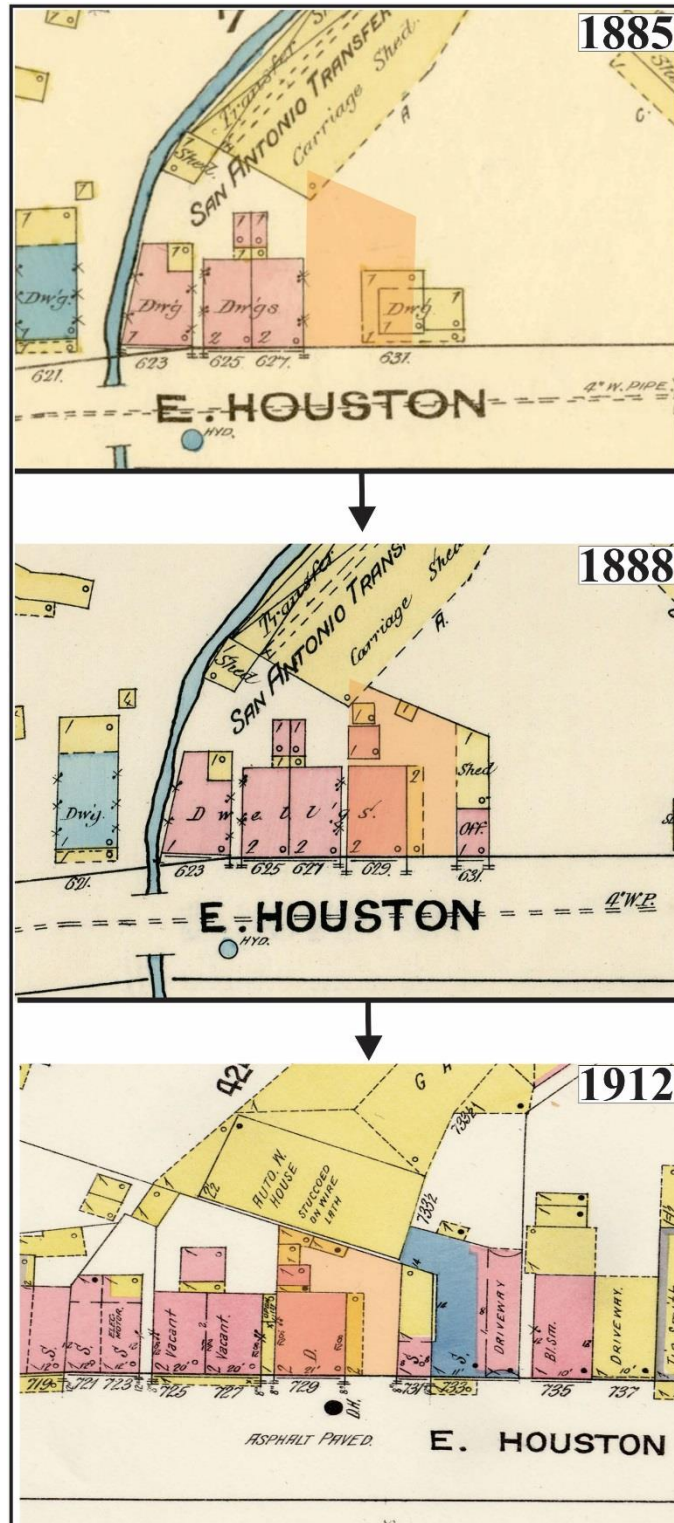


Figure 2-2. Gallagher site (highlighted in orange) development between 1885 and 1912, based on 1885, 1888, and 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Note that the Alamo Acequia had been built over by 1912.

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Chapter 3: Field and Laboratory Methods

Archaeologists excavated a 3-x-3 ft. (0.91-x0.91 m) unit in the Gallagher parking lot to accommodate a bore entry pit. Under the supervision of CAR archaeologists, an Optical Construction and Design (OCD) crew mechanically removed 9 in. (22.9 cm) of pavement (asphalt, concrete, and caliche base). The unit was excavated to 36 in. (91.4 cm) below the surface in 4-6 in. (10.2-15.2 cm) levels, and all soil matrices were screened through ¼-inch hardware cloth. Temporally diagnostic artifacts from each provenience were collected and labeled according to standard field sample naming convention and were processed using the laboratory methodology described below. Archaeological documentation included photographs and standard field notes.

As anticipated, this project produced a negligible collection of temporally diagnostic artifacts (n=138). In consultation with THC and following analyses and/or quantification, artifacts possessing little scientific value were discarded pursuant to Chapter 26.27(g)(2) of the Antiquities Code of Texas. Discarded artifact classes specific to this project included undecorated white earthenware, unidentifiable metal, bottle glass fragments, and post-1950 material.

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Chapter 4: Results of Field Investigation

An OCD crew delineated a 3-x-3 ft. (0.91-x-0.91 m) area on the asphalt surface to the north of the Gallagher Building (Figure 4-1). They used a concrete saw to cut through and remove 4 in. (10.2 cm) of asphalt and concrete, and then the crew broke through 5 in. (12.7 cm) of hard compacted caliche base with a jackhammer. The CAR archaeologist then hand excavated to 36 in. (91.4 cm) below the surface. The plan was to utilize the pit as a pilot hole for installing a horizontal directional drill under the parking lot pavement, across and under Houston Street, and into the Alamo Complex. A fiber optic cable would then be pulled through from the opposite end.

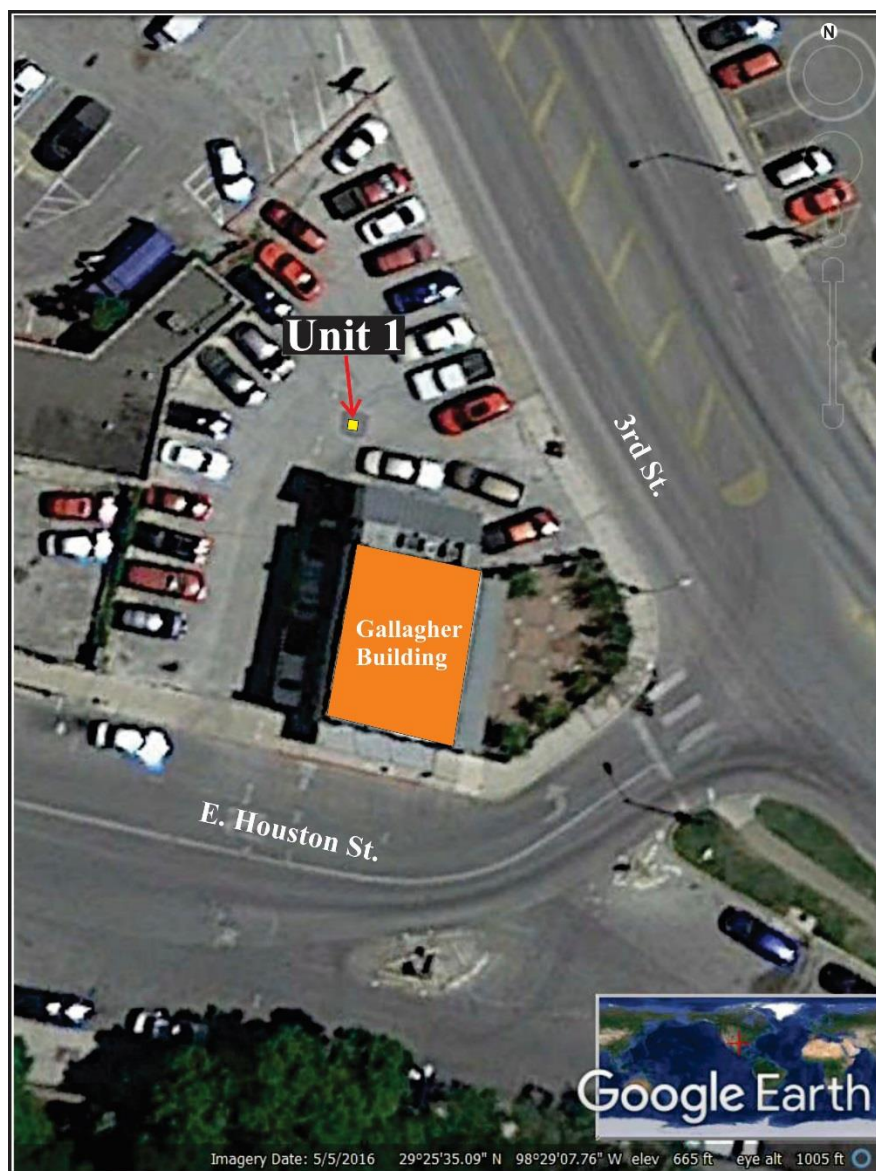


Figure 4-1. Gallagher Building and Unit 1 at center.

Unit Excavation

The project required only one unit be excavated. It was not necessary to mark off the unit with string line or set a datum, since the 3-x-3 ft. (0.91-x-0.91 m) unit was cut into the pavement. The asphalt pavement in this area was level, so the depth was recorded from the top edge of the asphalt pavement. Figure 4-2 shows the location of the unit and its approximate location on an aerial photograph and an 1888 Sanborn Map.

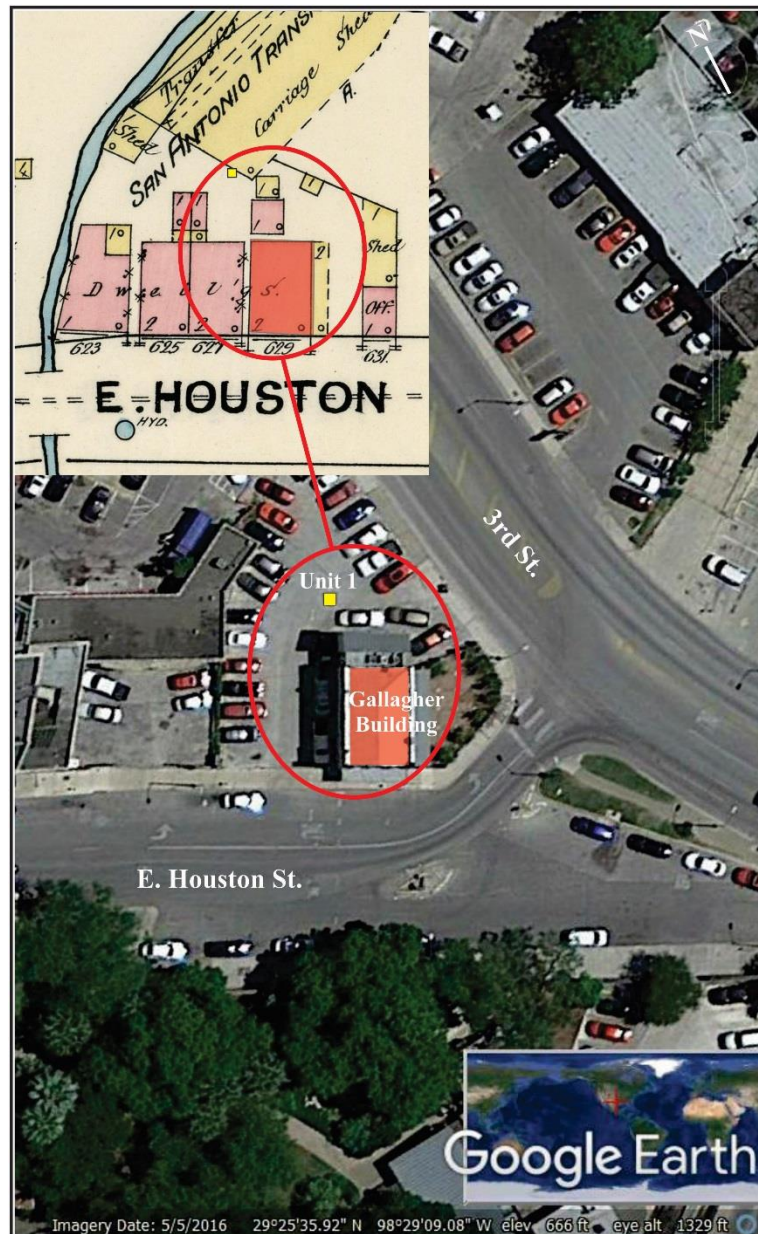


Figure 4-2. Gallagher Building and Unit 1 at center; inset above highlights building and unit on an 1888 Sanborn Map.

The first level (0-9.5 in.) was mechanically excavated using a concrete saw, jackhammer, and a few hand tools. No artifacts were observed. The CAR archaeologist then excavated through six arbitrary levels of between 4 and 6 in. (10.2 and 15.2 cm). In total, 138 artifacts were recovered (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1. Unit 1 Artifact Inventory

Artifact	Level 2 (9.5-14 in.)	Level 3 (14-18 in.)	Level 4 (18-22 in.)	Level 5 (22-26 in.)	Level 6 (26-30 in.)	Level 7 (30-36 in.)	Total
Bone, Faunal		59	4	15	20	4	102
Buttons, 2-hole	3		1				4
Chinese Porcelain		4					4
European Earthenware		2	1		1		4
European Porcelain	2						2
Other Ceramics					1		1
Glass - container/vessel					3	2	5
Glass - flat/window			1				1
Nails	7						7
Burned Rock					1		1
Debitage			1				1
Shell			1				1
Other Metal - harmonica reed plate and a probable dental instrument			2				2
Other Rock - granite fragment, probable vessel lid (2.5 in. dia.)				1			1
Other Rock - slate fragments, roofing tile				2			2
Grand Total	12	65	11	18	26	6	138

Note: Level 1 (0-9.5 in.) was asphalt and concrete pavement

Level 2 (9.5-14 in.; 24.1-35.6 cm) and Level 3 (14-18 in.; 35.6-45.7 cm) were composed of a sandy clay matrix with caliche inclusions. The recovered cultural material consisted of bone fragments and few ceramic fragments. Most of the artifacts were undiagnostic—bottle glass, undecorated white earthenware, and metal fragments. The diagnostic material collected from Level 2 consisted of nails, porcelain sherds, and buttons. Level 3 produced a large number of faunal fragments (n=59), as well as a few ceramic sherds.

The soil excavated in Level 4 (18-22 in.; 45.7-55.9 cm) and Level 5 (22-26 in.; 55.9-66 cm) was identical, except for the bottom of Level 5. The final 2 in. (5.1 cm) of Level 5 was a dark clay matrix with fist-size

limestone cobbles. Level 4 produced faunal fragments, window glass, a harmonica reed plate, and what appears to be a dental instrument. A few more faunal fragments and two fragments of slate, roofing tile were recovered from Level 5.

Level 6 (26-30 in.; 66-76.2 cm) and Level 7 (30-36 in.; 76.2-91.4 cm) consisted of a dark clay soil. Very few artifacts were recovered from these two levels, and most were encountered within the southeast quadrant of the unit. This area seemed disturbed, as evidenced by clay, sewer pipe fragments, which were not collected. The few artifacts recovered were faunal fragments, bottle glass, and ceramic sherds. The remnant of a wall footer was exposed at 34 in. (86.4 cm) below the surface. The stones were oriented north-south along the west wall of the unit, and these were left undisturbed. As seen in Figure 4-3, the footing may relate to the San Antonio Transfer Stables. The rest of the unit was excavated to 36 in. (91.4 cm) below the surface. The west wall profile of this unit is presented in Figure 4-4.

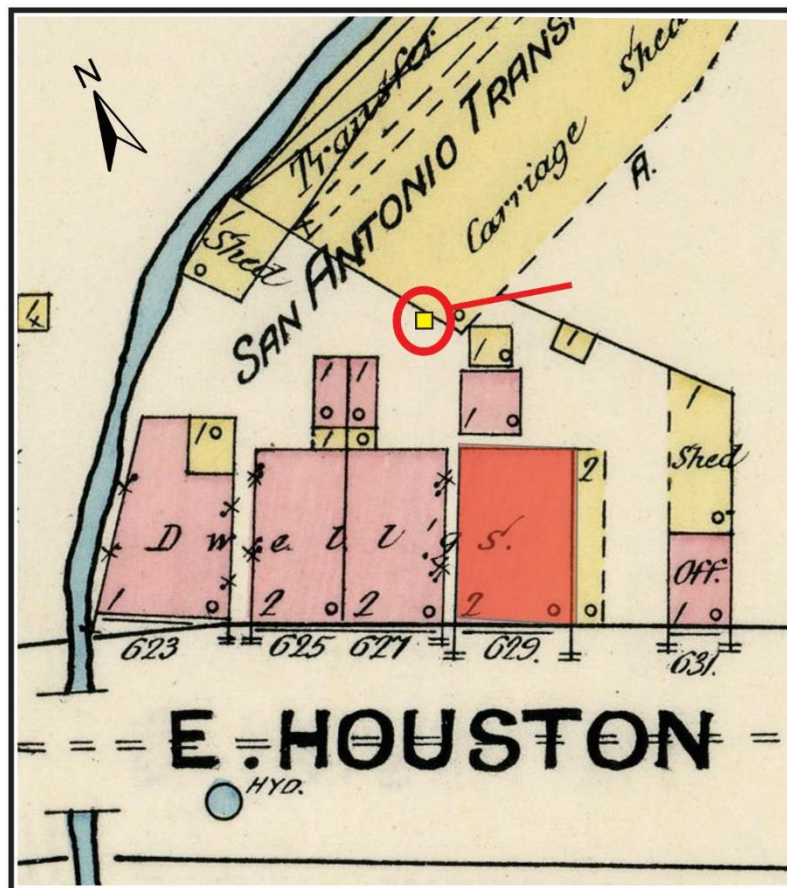


Figure 4-3. Unit 1 (highlighted in yellow) location in relation to San Antonio Transfer carriage shed.

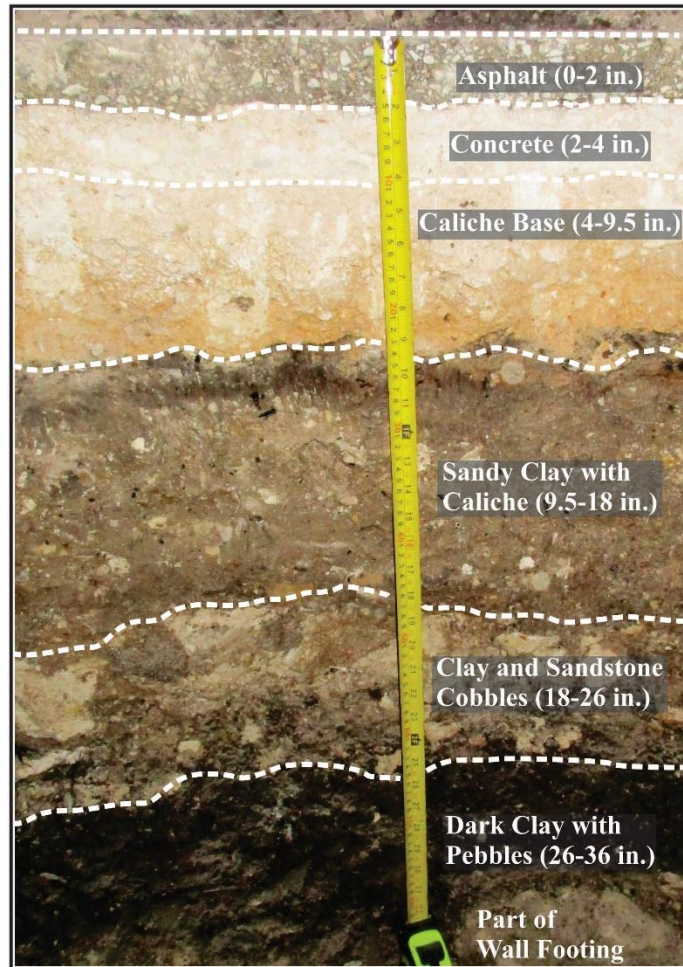


Figure 4-4. Wall profile of test unit.

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Chapter 5: Summary and Recommendations

CAR archaeologists completed testing of a small area behind the Gallagher Building in late September 2015. The project was cancelled, and the area will not be significantly impacted by the installation of fiber optic cables. Limited testing identified a wall footing, but the archaeologists did not remove or further test the find. No other features were observed. Further construction and ground disturbance greater than 30 in. (76.2 cm) below the surface has the potential to unearth earlier foundations and features. CAR recommends monitoring and/or additional testing for below ground excavations that exceed 30 in. (76.2 cm) in any future development in the Gallagher parking lot.

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