Archaeological Investigations for VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority Underground Storage Tank Replacement, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

by

Sarah Wigley

Texas Antiquities Permit No. 30836

REDACTED

Principal Investigator
Leonard Kemp

Prepared for:
VIA-MTA
123 N. Medina Street
San Antonio, Texas 78207

Prepared by:
Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
One UTSA Circle
San Antonio, Texas 78249-1644
Technical Report, No. 108

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Abstract:

From March to September 2023, the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), in response to a request from VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority (VIA-MTA) conducted archaeological monitoring of trench excavation in support of the replacement of existing underground storage tanks and associated utilities at 1720 North Flores Street, San Antonio, Texas. As the project area is located on VIA-MTA property, the project required compliance with the Texas Antiquities Code, and review under the Unified Development Code of the City of San Antonio (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634). The project was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 30836. David Yelacic, former CAR Director, served as the Principal Investigator and directed the fieldwork until his departure from the CAR in August of 2023. Following his departure, Leonard Kemp assumed the role of Principal Investigator and Sarah Wigley served as the Project Archaeologist.

The project area, spanning 0.07 hectares (ha; 0.2 acres), is located east of San Pedro Creek within the current VIA-MTA bus parking lot at the Via Metro Center. Potential resources of concern included the San Pedro Acequia (41BX337), as well as the potential for prehistoric resources associated with the San Pedro Creek. Cultural material dating to the early twentieth century was recovered from one trench. No other artifacts or cultural features were recorded. However, based on the sensitivity of the area, the CAR recommends monitoring of any future ground-disturbing activities that have impacts below the hardscapes within the project area. All artifacts collected and records generated during this project were curated at the CAR curation facility on the UTSA Main Campus under Accession Number 2826.
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The field work for this project was completed by Peggy Wall, Jesus Figueroa, and Dakota Maas of the CAR. Thanks to the field staff for their efforts. David Yelacic, former CAR Director, developed the scope of work and directed most of the fieldwork. Cynthia Munoz, CAR Interim Director, Lead Curator, and Lab Director, oversaw the lab processing and curation of this project. Peggy Wall, in addition to her efforts in the field, processed the GIS data and produced the graphics and final report. Cynthia Munoz, Dr. Raymond Mauldin, and Leonard Kemp provided guidance and assistance during report production, and Dr. Mauldin provided helpful comments on a draft of this report.

Thanks to Kevin Schnitzer of VIA for his assistance facilitating and coordinating this project. Thanks to Matthew Elverson of COSA-OHP and Dr. Emily Dylla of the THC for their assistance and review of this project. J.F. Petroleum Group conducted the excavations.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Beginning March 9, 2023 and continuing sporadically through September 15, 2023, CAR-UTSA conducted archaeological monitoring of excavations for the replacement of existing underground storage tanks and associated utilities on VIA-MTA property. The scope of work originally called for proactive backhoe trenching. However, due to the thick pavement layer across the parking lot, only monitoring was conducted. The work was conducted in response to a request from VIA-MTA, a quasi-governmental entity, and carried out on VIA-MTA property. Therefore, the project required compliance with the Texas Antiquities Code and review under the Unified Development Code of the City of San Antonio (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634). The work was accomplished under Texas Antiquities Permit (TAP) Number 30836. David Yelacic, former CAR Director, served as the Principal Investigator and Project Archaeologist until his departure from the CAR in August 2023. Following his departure, Leonard Kemp assumed the role of Principal Investigator and Sarah Wigley assumed the role of Project Archaeologist.

The project area encompasses 0.07 ha (0.2 acres) within the VIA-MTA bus parking lot located at 1720 North Flores Street in north-central San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas (Figure 1-1). The lot is bounded by West Myrle Street on...
Chapter 1: Introduction

the north, San Pedro Avenue on the east, East Laurel Street on the south, and San Pedro Creek on the west. Segments of the San Pedro Acequia (41BX337) have been previously recorded within vicinity of the project area (Cox 1986, 1993; Wigley 2020). In addition, the project area’s proximity to the San Pedro Creek indicates potential for prehistoric deposits (Mauldin et al. 2015; Meissner 2000; Zapata and Meissner 2003).

CAR staff conducted three days of monitoring over the course of the project. While a limited quantity of early twentieth-century material was seen in one trench, no significant cultural deposits or features were discovered during monitoring. However, due to the sensitivity of the area and previous work recording the acequia in the vicinity of the project, CAR recommends archaeological monitoring of any future impacts below the hardscapes of the parking lot. Records generated and artifacts collected during the project are curated at the CAR under accession 2826.

Report Outline

This report includes five chapters. Following this introduction, the second chapter provides a brief environmental and culture history background, followed by a review of the archaeological sites previously recorded in the area. The third chapter discusses the lab and field methods used during the completion of this project. The fourth chapter discusses the results of the investigation. The fifth chapter provides a project summary and CAR’s recommendations.
Chapter 2: Project Background

This chapter includes a brief discussion of the natural environment and culture history of the project area to provide context for the results of the project. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the archaeological sites recorded within 0.5 km of the project area.

Environment

The project area is in north-central San Antonio in a neighborhood known as Five Points, so named due to the unique intersection of Fredericksburg Road, N. Flores Street, N. Laredo Street, La Harpe Street, and Laurel Street in the vicinity (COSA 2009). It is immediately east of San Pedro Creek and lies 201-214 m above sea level. The project area is currently in use as a parking lot for VIA buses as part of the VIA Metro Center. The surrounding area is a mix of residential and commercial development. San Pedro Springs Park is approximately 260 m to the north.

Soils within the project area are composed of Branyon clays (HtB) of one to three percent slopes (Figure 2-1). These soils are found on stream terraces and reach depths of more than...
200 cm. They are well drained and considered prime farmland (NRCS 2024). The project area is within the Southern Blackland Prairie ecoregion. This community historically consists of a true tallgrass prairie dominated by big bluestem (Andropogon gerardii), Indiangrass (Sorghastrum nutans), switchgrass (Panicum virgatum), eastern gamagrass (Tripsacum dactyloides), and little bluestem (Schizachyrium scoparium). Other plant species include midgrasses, a variety of forbs, and live oak (Quercus virginiana) and hackberry (Celtis spp.) trees. In most areas, the natural vegetation has been lost, first to row crop agriculture and later to urban development (NRCS 2024). This is true within the project area as well.

San Antonio is positioned where the southernmost Great Plains meet the Gulf Coast, which is demarcated by the Balcones Escarpment. It is also near a significant climate boundary, partitioning a humid-subtropical from an arid zone (Petersen 2001). The city’s location near these significant geological and climactic boundaries results in a varied resource base. The area has a number of reliable freshwater sources, including the San Antonio River, freshwater artesian springs, and the Edwards Aquifer. The San Pedro Springs Creek, which rises at San Pedro Springs, is located about 300 m north of the project area. The springs were once a reliable fresh water source, but significant reduction in water flow from the springs resulting from the drilling of wells into the aquifer in the late nineteenth century, as well as heavy channelization of the creek in the twentieth century, decimated the source (Eckhardt 2024; Sanborn 1911, 1931, 1950). This decline will be discussed in more detail in the following section. The growing season in San Antonio averages 270 days (Petersen 2001:22). The lowest average temperature is 39°F (4°C) in January, with the highest average of 96°F (36°C) occurring in July (Long 2024). Though highly variable, the average annual rainfall is approximately 76 cm, with seasonal peaks in the spring and fall (Petersen 2001:22). The project area is near the borders of the Balconian biotic province, an intermediate ecological area between the eastern forest and the western desert, and the Tamaulipan biotic province, having a semi-arid climate dominated by thorny brush (Blair 1950).

**Culture History**

The vicinity of the project area includes significant precontact and historic sites. A broad review is included for these periods to provide context for project results.

**Texas Prior to European Contact**

The precontact record in Texas is generally divided into the Paleoindian, Archaic, and Late Prehistoric periods. Bexar County’s archaeological record has been included in reviews of both Central (Collins 2004) and South (Hester 1980) Texas, as the county is near the boundary between the two cultural areas. The following summary generally follows a Central Texas chronology.

The Paleoindian period in Central Texas spans 13,000-9000 years before present (BP). In-depth reviews of this period are available (see Bousman et al. 2004). Groups inhabiting the area during this period are generally characterized as highly mobile (Bousman et al. 2004). Temporally diagnostic artifacts from the period include Folsom and Clovis points, among others (see Turner et al. 2011). Fauna from Paleoindian components on sites such as Lubbock Lake (41LU1) and Wilson-Leonard (41WM235) suggest a broad subsistence base (Bousman et al. 2004). Within Bexar County, multiple sites have Paleoindian components. These include the St. Mary’s Hall site (41BX229; Hester 2024) and the Richard Beene site (41BX831; Bousman et al. 2004; McGraw and Hindes 1987; Thoms and Clabaugh 2011).

The Archaic period in Central Texas ranges from 9000-1200 BP. The period is characterized by several technological developments, including an increased diversity of material culture and the use of heated rock technology (Carpenter and Hartnett 2011; Collins 2004; Johnson and Goode 1994; Thoms and Clabaugh 2011). The period is often subdivided into Early, Middle, and Late Archaic periods (see Collins 2004; Hester 2004). Temporally diagnostic artifacts from the Early Archaic period (9000-6800 BP) include Angostura, Early Split Stem, and Martindale-Uvalde dart points, among others (Collins 2004). The Middle Archaic spans 6800-4200 BP. Temporally diagnostic artifacts from this period include Calf Creek, Bell-Andice, Nolan, and Travis points, among others (Collins 2004; Turner et al. 2011). The Late Archaic spans 4200-1200 BP. Temporally diagnostic artifacts from the Late Archaic include a wide variety of types, with Pedernales, Ensor, and Frio points being common (Collins 2004). Numerous Archaic Period components have been recorded in Bexar County, including Olmos Dam (41BX1; Lukowski 1988; Orchard and Campbell 1954), 41BX17 (Munoz et al. 2011; Schuetz 1966; Wigley 2018), 41BX323 (Figueroa and Dowling 2007; Houk et al. 1999; Houk and Miller 2001; Katz and Fox 1979; Meskill et al. 2000; Meskill and Frederick 1995; Miller et al. 1999; Miller and Barile 2001), and 41BX1396 (Barile et al. 2002; Katz and Fox 1979). In addition, significant Late Archaic deposits have been previously recorded at 41BX19 (San Pedro Springs Park), approximately 395 m north of the project area (Mauldin et al. 2015).
interval of this period also includes the adoption of ceramic technology (Collins 2004). There is evidence that burned rock middens increased in use (Black et al. 1997; Mauldin et al. 2003). Bison remains are common on Late Prehistoric sites (Mauldin et al. 2012), though they may have been more intensively exploited toward the end of the period (Lohse et al. 2014). Sites with significant Late Prehistoric components in Bexar County include two multi-component sites mentioned previously, site 41BX256 (Osburn et al. 2007; Padilla and Nickels 2010; Padilla and Trierweiler 2012; Scerlock et al. 1976) and site 41BX323 (Figueroa and Dowling 2007; Houk et al. 1999; Houk and Miller 2001; Katz and Fox 1979; Meskill et al. 2000; Meskill and Frederick 1995; Miller et al. 1999; Miller and Barile 2001). Late Prehistoric deposits have also been documented at 41BX19 (Mauldin et al. 2015).

**Historic Period**

In Central and South Texas, the historic period began with the first documented appearance of Europeans. Spain laid claim to the area that would become Texas early, following the 1519 Alonso Álvarez de Pineda voyage along the Texas Coast, but the first Europeans arrived in AD 1528 when Cabeza de Vaca and other survivors of the Narvaez expedition washed up on the Texas Coast (see Krieger 2000). Although interactions between Europeans and Indigenous people in the area were infrequent within Central Texas, the lifeways of the Indigenous populations there were significantly affected by the spread of European disease as well as displacement of populations by European incursions (Foster 1998; Kenmotsu and Arnn 2012). Spain made little attempt to establish settlements in Texas prior to 1700 (Chipman and Joseph 2010). However, motivated by concerns about the French encroachment into Texas in 1685 by Robert Cavalier Sieur de la Salle’s expedition and colonization in Louisiana in the early 1700s, the Spanish government endeavored to strengthen its hold on Texas, which previously was sparsely populated by Europeans (Cruz 1988). Missions founded in East Texas in the early 1700s were attempts to secure Spain’s hold on the area. Additionally, a Spanish expedition intended to initiate contact with the Indigenous population and prevent them from establishing trade relationships with the French reached San Pedro Springs in present-day San Antonio on April 13, 1709 (Cruz 1988).

The primary institutions Spain employed to secure its colonies were the missions, which intended to assimilate the Indigenous population through religious conversion, the presidio, which played a military defensive role, and, ultimately, the establishment of chartered town settlements (Cox 1997; de la Teja 1995). The missions and the presidio were intended to be transitory institutions, whose land and possessions would ultimately be distributed among successfully converted indigenous families (de la Teja 1995). The Spanish Colonial acequia system in San Antonio was established to serve as a source of water and irrigation for the inhabitants of these institutions. San Antonio is one of the few large cities of Spanish origin that still has traces of its original acequia system, which spanned more than 80 km at its peak (Cox 2005).

Mission San Antonio de Valero, the first Spanish settlement established in what would become San Antonio, was founded on May 1, 1718, on the west bank of the San Antonio River south of San Pedro Springs (Habig 1968:38). The Presidio de Bexar and the Villa de Bexar were established four days later. Archival evidence suggests that these settlements were located near the San Pedro Springs, possibly within modern-day San Pedro Park (Meissner 2000), although firm archaeological evidence of these early settlements has not been discovered. The mission was moved to the east bank of the San Antonio River about a year later, and it was moved a third time to its final location following storm damage in 1724 (Habig 1968:44). The villa and presidio were relocated in 1722 (Habig 1968:38). Archaeological material associated with this second location of the presidio, including a Spanish Colonial sheet midden, has been documented at site 41BX2088 (McKenzie et al. 2016). Four more missions were founded to the south along the San Antonio River between 1720 and 1731 (de la Teja 1995).

Although an early, unofficial town settlement associated with the presidio began to develop with the arrival of presidio soldiers and their families, this settlement lacked legal status (de la Teja 1991). The arrival of a group of immigrants from the Canary Islands in 1731 marked the establishment of the Villa de San Fernando (Buck 1980; de la Teja 1995; Poyo 1991). The villa was granted water rights to the San Pedro Creek (de la Teja 1995). The early years of the settlement were marked with conflict between the villa, the missions, and the earlier settlers, particularly over land and irrigation (Buck 1980; de la Teja 1991, 1995; Poyo 1991). An acequia for the new settlement, the San Pedro (41BX337), was in operation by 1735 (Cox 2005: 35). The San Pedro Acequia was approximately 6.4 km in length. It watered 161 ha south of the villa (Cox 2005). The acequia ran south from San Pedro Springs between San Pedro Creek and the San Antonio River (Cox 2005). The current project area, located approximately 170 m south of the acequia’s origin point at San Pedro Springs, either intersects or is in close proximity to the acequia trajectory based on archival evidence and previous archaeological investigations (Figure 2-2; COSA-OHP 2024; Cox 1986, 1993; Freisleben 1875; Sanborn 1911). A second acequia, the Upper Labor (41BX1273), drains into San Pedro Creek about 200 m south of the project area. The Upper Labor was constructed by 1778 (Cox et al. 1999; McKenzie 2017; Wigley 2020).
Figure 2-2. The project area overlain on Freisleben 1875 Map of San Pedro Springs Reserve (Freisleben 1875).
In 1793, Mission Valero was secularized and the associated lower farms were surveyed and distributed (Cox 1997; de la Teja 1995). The mission compound later served a primarily military function in the city, and it was, significantly, the site of the Battle of the Alamo in 1836. The other missions were not fully secularized until 1824, when their churches and furnishings were inventoried and surrendered (Habig 1968). However, they were partially secularized in 1794, when their farmlands were surveyed and redistributed, and the distribution of former mission farmlands contributed to the growth of the town (de la Teja 1995).

A failed uprising for independence from Spain in 1812 depleted San Antonio’s population and negatively affected the city’s development for decades (Cox 1997). Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, and Texas became part of the state of Coahuila. Texas revolted against Mexico in 1835. Mexican General Martín Perfecto de Cos fortified the old Mission Valero against the Texans, including diverting a branch of the acequia to flow outside the mission compound (Cox 1997). The Texans defeated General Cos, but they were defeated themselves by Santa Anna after a 13-day siege in 1836 at what became known as the Battle of the Alamo (Cox 1997). In the fall of 1836, Santa Anna was ultimately defeated and Texas became a Republic (Cox 1997). Several sites in downtown San Antonio include features associated with this military activity, including a trench feature associated with General Cos’ occupation of Main Plaza at 41BX1752 (Hanson 2016), and a Mexican fortification trench associated with the Siege of Bexar at 41BX2170 (Kemp et al. 2020).

During the century that followed Texas’s break with Mexico, San Antonio saw considerable growth despite the impact of numerous conflicts. In December 1837, San Antonio was incorporated as one of the early acts of the newly established Republic of Texas. Several epidemics impacted the city’s population during the early to mid-1800s, spread in part by pollution of the acequia system. San Antonio tried to combat the issue by establishing standards of cleanliness, but with limited success (Cox 2005). After a turbulent period in which Texas saw conflict with both Mexico, which did not accept the new Republic’s independence, and local Native American groups, Texas became part of the United States in 1846. This sparked the Mexican War between the United States and Mexico. The conflict ultimately resulted in setting the Rio Grande as Texas’s southern boundary, as well as the United States gaining significant territory on the western side of the continent, including California, Arizona, and New Mexico (Bauer 2023). During the tumultuous period from 1813-1867, the San Pedro Springs area was occupied by various military groups on multiple occasions (Eckhardt 2024).

In the 1840s, French and German immigrants began to settle in San Antonio and the surrounding area. The Five Points neighborhood included several German businesses during the 1800s (Uecker 1991). Cultural material associated with one such business in the area, Wohlfarth’s mercantile, was recorded by the CAR in 2014 (McKenzie 2015). By the 1850s, recent European settlers outnumbered the Mexican and Anglo populations in the city (Cox 1997). Texas seceded from the United States, joined the Confederacy in 1861, and primarily served a supply role during the Civil War. Five years later, Texas surrendered to the Union and rejoined the United States (Wooster 2023).

The arrival of the railroad in 1877 resulted in significant growth in San Antonio (Cox 1997). The Five Points neighborhood began to be subdivided for residences in the late 1800s (Uecker 1991). The late 1800s also saw infrastructure and economic development throughout the city, including water, electric, and gas utilities (Heusinger 1951). City leaders also attempted to update the acequia system with the construction of new ditches, including the construction of the Alazán Ditch (41BX620) in 1875, originating about 300 north of the project area in San Pedro Park (Cox 2005; McKenzie 2017). The adoption of the new water works system in 1878 transformed the acequia system into, primarily, a drainage system, and water flow was reduced in the 1890s due to the increased drilling of wells that had also affected San Pedro Creek. As a result of these infrastructural changes in the city, as well as ongoing cleanliness issues, the San Pedro Acequia was closed in 1912 (Cox 2005).

From 1906-1918, the project area was occupied by an electrified amusement park called Electric Park (Figure 2-3; Zapata and McKenzie 2017). Review of archival maps indicates the decreased flow of San Pedro Springs Creek during this time period (Figure 2-3; Freisleben 1875), as well as channelization and modification of the Creek and acequia for the use of the Electric Park (Figure 2-3). By 1931, the project area was occupied by the San Pedro Park Tourists Lodges and was bisected by West Park Avenue. The Electric Park had been demolished. However, the creek retained its straightened trajectory as a result of the previous modifications, and a sharp bend not previously noted to the northwest of the project area suggests additional modification (Figure 2-4). By 1951, the project area had become a bus staging yard and West Park Avenue has been truncated to end east of the project area. A portion of the current fueling station has been built west of the project area. San Pedro Creek at this stage terminated at this fueling station and was directed underground (Figure 2-5).
Chapter 2: Project Background

Figure 2-3. The project area on the 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.
Figure 2-4. The project area on the 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.
Figure 2-5. The project area on the 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.
Previous Archaeology

A search of the Texas Archaeological Sites Atlas found five archaeological sites within 0.5 km of the project area (Table 2-1, Figure 2-6). Previous archaeological investigations (Cox 1986, 1993; Wigley 2020) have documented multiple segments of the San Pedro Acequia (41BX337) near the project area. Multiple archaeological surveys that did not record any sites have taken place within 1 km of the project area (THC 2024).

Site 41BX19 includes the San Pedro Springs and surrounding area in modern-day San Pedro Park. The site contains precontact and historic materials, and is a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) site as well as a State Antiquities Landmark (SAL). The site has an extensive history of avocational exploration dating back to the 1870s, which includes reports of human remains (Mauldin et al. 2015), and has been the subject of multiple archaeological investigations (THC 2024). Site 41BX19 was formally recorded by the Witte Museum in 1966 as a prehistoric site and the location of earliest Spanish settlement in San Antonio (Mauldin et al. 2015; THC 2024). Portions of the Alazán Ditch (41BX620) have been documented within the park boundaries (Fox 1978; Meissner 2000). Multiple investigations have attempted to locate intact portions of the San Pedro Acequia and dam within the park, but none have been successful (Houk 1999; Mauldin et al. 2015). Intact historic deposits have been documented (Zapata and Meissner 2003) as well as intact prehistoric deposits dating to the Late Archaic and Late Prehistoric (Mauldin et al. 2015), despite evidence of extensive disturbance in many areas of the park due to construction (Mauldin et al. 2015). A recent investigation confirmed the presence of significant prehistoric deposits and refined the known extent within the park boundaries (Gadus and Dockall 2022).

Multiple sections of the San Pedro Acequia (41BX337) have been documented within or near the project area and have been documented during archaeological work conducted downtown (Fox 1978; Valdez and Eaton 1979). Multiple sections of the acequia were recorded within the project area by the CAR during trenching in 1986 (Cox 1986). The acequia in this area was recorded as lined with cut limestone and found just below the surface. The walls were approximately 46 cm wide, and the total width of the acequia was approximately 1.5 m. Predominately twentieth-century artifacts were recovered, likely associated with the period in which the acequia was closed (Cox 1986). An additional unlined section was recorded at a depth of 46 cm, approximately 200 m north of the project area, just outside San Pedro Springs Park (Cox 1993). In 2020 a partially lined section was recorded on the other side of Laurel Street approximately 200 m south of the project area, also on VIA property (Wigley 2020). Numerous sections of the San Pedro Acequia, both lined and unlined, have been documented throughout its path through downtown San Antonio (THC 2024).

Site 41BX620 is the Alazán Ditch. This site was recorded by Fox in 1978, who documented a section near the San Pedro Springs, but a trinomial was not assigned until 1983 (Fox 1978; THC 2024). Construction of this late addition to the acequia system was completed in 1875. It includes portions encased in limestone that run below ground (Nickels and Cox 1996). The Alazán Ditch functioned poorly from the beginning of its construction and was closed by 1903 (Thomas and McKenzie 2019). Portions of the Alazán Ditch have been documented during a number of archaeological projects (Fox 1978; Labadie 1987; Nickels and Cox 1996; Thomas and McKenzie 2019; THC 2024).

Site 41BX1273/41BX2043 is the Upper Labor Acequia and associated dam. A small, unlined portion of the acequia was recorded by the CAR in 1987 (Fox and Cox 1988). In 1996, a portion of the Upper Labor dam was recorded when it was exposed following a rainstorm. Backhoe trenching exposed other portions of the acequia, including a Spanish Colonial component composed of rough limestone and a nineteenth-century modification consisting of cut, ashlar-dressed limestone blocks (Cox et al. 1999). At this time, the trinomial 41BX1273 was assigned to both the dam and acequia. The site was revisited by the CAR in 2013-2014 (McKenzie 2017) and the dam and the acequia were given a new trinomial, 41BX2043 (THC 2024). This trinomial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trinomial</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Site Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41BX19</td>
<td>Prehistoric/Spanish Colonial/Historic</td>
<td>San Pedro Springs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX337</td>
<td>Spanish Colonial/Historic</td>
<td>San Pedro Acequia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX620</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Alazán Ditch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX1273/41BX2043</td>
<td>Spanish Colonial/Historic</td>
<td>Upper Labor Acequia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2422</td>
<td>Late 19th to early 20th century</td>
<td>Abandoned infrastructure and foundation remnants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2-6. Previously recorded archaeological sites found within 0.5 km of the project area.
is not used in the associated report, which instead uses the designation 41BX1273 for both the dam and *acequia* (McKenzie 2017). Multiple sections of the *acequia* have been documented along its path through downtown San Antonio (THC 2024).

Site 41BX2422 consists of late nineteenth to early twentieth-century infrastructure recorded by Cox McLain Environmental Consulting during archaeological monitoring in 2020 (THC 2024). Five clay sewer main remnants and two concrete blocks with square rebar were recorded. The site is at the intersection of North Flores and Fredericksburg Road. Artifacts recovered included container glass, metal, and brick. The site was determined to be not eligible for designation as a SAL or listing in the NRHP within the project right-of-way (ROW).
Chapter 2: Project Background

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Chapter 3: Field and Laboratory Methods

This chapter discusses the field and laboratory methods used by the CAR during the completion of this project.

**Field Methods**

The scope originally called for pro-active backhoe trenching to be carried out prior to the commencement of the project to determine if prehistoric deposits were present. However, after consulting with VIA it was determined that this was not feasible due to thickness of the parking lot surfaces. CAR consulted with the THC and COSA-OHP and ultimately submitted a permit amendment to modify the scope of work to monitoring only, which was approved. CAR staff monitored excavations associated with the installation of a new pipe trench to serve the liquid fuel dispensers. Archaeologists kept a daily log of activities. All activities were documented in this log and supported by digital data, including GPS observations and photographs, where appropriate. Where appropriate, diagnostic artifacts were collected. All collected material, recorded with provenience information, was transported to the CAR laboratory for processing, analysis, and curation.

**Laboratory and Curation Methods**

Throughout the project, the analysis and organization of records, artifacts, and daily logs was ongoing. All records generated during the project were prepared following Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 79 and THC requirements for State Held-in-Trust collections. Field forms were printed on acid-free paper and completed with pencil.

Collected artifacts were brought to the CAR laboratory, washed, air-dried, and stored in 4-mil zip-lock, archival-quality bags. Materials needing extra support were double-bagged, and acid-free labels were placed in all artifact bags. Each laser printer generated label contains provenience information and a corresponding lot number. Artifacts are stored in acid-free boxes that are labeled with standard tags.

All field notes, forms, photographs, and drawings were placed in labeled archival folders. Digital photographs were printed on acid-free paper. All recovered artifacts and project-related materials, including the final report, are permanently stored at the CAR’s curation facility under accession 2826.
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Chapter 4: Results

CAR monitored excavations associated with the installation of underground fuel tanks and associated utilities (Figure 4-1). Monitoring activities took place intermittently on three days: March 9, 2023, April 4, 2023, and September 15, 2023. The excavations took place in proximity to the projected location of the San Pedro Acequia (41BX337).

Monitors noted a thick (15-25 cm) layer of concrete at the surface sitting on top of a layer of yellow/orange road base. The excavations contained shallow disturbances by utilities, but the majority of soil consisted of apparently undisturbed very dark gray (10YR 3/1) silty clay (Figures 4-2, 4-3). Trenches ranged in depth from 81-122 cm.

This thick layer has been recorded across the bus parking area during previous investigations (Wigley and Yelacic 2023). A trash deposit extending to 81 cm below surface was recorded in the northern portion of the monitoring area.
Chapter 4: Results

Figure 4-2. Trench profile observed during monitoring.

Figure 4-3. Trench with shallowly buried utilities.
The deposit contained wire nails, unidentified metal fragments, brick fragments, and clear glass. One clear glass bottle that had diagnostic characteristics, discussed below, was collected. Other areas that CAR staff monitored lacked cultural material.

The complete clear glass bottle recovered from the trash deposit appears to be of early Owens machine manufacture, based on the rough suction scar on the base (Figure 4-4; Lindsey 2024). The bottle is embossed “E.R. DURKEE AND CO. NEW YORK” on the body and “BOTTLE PATENTED APRIL 17 1877” on, the base, along with an imitation of a British pottery mark known to be used on this specific brand of bottle (Lockhart et al. 2015). Research on Durkee-branded glass bottles suggests the bottle is a salad dressing bottle that was in use from approximately 1908-1929. This characterization is based on the finish, shape and embossed labeling and designs (Lockhart et al. 2015). However, this bottle has not been solarized as is common in other Durkee salad dressing bottles from this period. The bottle, along with the nature of the other material noted in the deposit, including wire nails, dates the trash deposit to the early twentieth century. This suggests the trash deposit may be associated with the period that the property was in use as the Electric Park.

CAR staff was informed by VIA in December 2023 that no more excavation for the project was planned (Schnitzer email December 18, 2023). No evidence of the acequia, other cultural features, or potentially significant cultural material was found during monitoring. However, the negative survey results do offer some information about the likely trajectory of the acequia in the vicinity of the project area, given that the trenches monitored exhibited limited disturbance.

Archival sources and previous archaeology all agree that the acequia path was within 30 m of the project area, but the trajectories differ slightly (see Figures 2-2, 2-3, 4-5). COSA-OHP’s projected path is the furthest west and closest to the San Pedro Creek. When this projected trajectory is compared with the Freisleben map, it intersects the creek path in some areas. The Freisleben map (see Figure 2-2), which depicts the acequia just before it was closed, shows a more meandering channel than either the Freisleben map or the COSA-OHP projection. As such it matches the COSA-OHP projection within the northern part of the project area, but then meanders to the east until it nearly matches the Freisleben map at the southern end of the project area. It is unclear if these differences are a result of changes to the acequia itself over the span of its use or small errors during the mapping process.

Previous investigatory trenching, discussed in Chapter 2, has been conducted within the bus lot north and south of the project area and successfully identified sections of the acequia (Cox 1986, 1993; Figure 4-5). These sections are mapped further east than the trajectory shown on any of the archival sources, but most closely follow the Freisleben map trajectory, being 2-10 m to the east. The section of 41BX337 recorded about 215 m to the south in 2020 (see Figure 2-6; Wigley 2020) also
closely matched the Freisleben map trajectory. The negative results of this project, in conjunction with these earlier results, suggest remaining buried portions of the *acequia* may be located slightly further to the east than projected by archival sources. This possibility should be considered if any future construction is planned that may affect this area.
Chapter 5: Summary and Recommendations

Sporadically, from March 9, 2023 to September 15, 2023, CAR staff monitored excavations associated with the installation of fueling infrastructure. The improvements had potential to impact the San Pedro Acequia (41BX337) or other cultural deposits potentially present in the area.

Monitoring of backhoe trenches documented an early twentieth-century trash deposit. No other cultural materials or features were documented. However, due to the recorded presence of the San Pedro Acequia in the area, as well as potential for significant prehistoric and Spanish Colonial deposits due to the proximity to site 41BX19 and San Pedro Springs, the area retains a high probability for significant deposits. Therefore, CAR recommends that any future excavations in the area that impact sediment below the thick hardscape layer should be subject to archaeological investigation.
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