INDEX OF TEXAS ARCHAEOLOGY
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Volume 2015 Article 144

2015

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An Intensive Cultural Resources Survey of the
Leander Independent School District's
Proposed Travisso School Project
Travis County, Texas

Document No. 150001
Job No. 100043135

AN INTENSIVE CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF THE LEANDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S PROPOSED TRAVISSO SCHOOL PROJECT TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

TEXAS ANTIQUITIES PERMIT NO. 7093

Prepared for:

Leander Independent School District
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May 2015

Abstract

At the request of Leander Independent School District, Atkins North America, Inc. (Atkins) conducted an intensive cultural resources survey of a 23-acre tract in northwestern Travis County, Texas, between the cities of Jonestown and Cedar Park. The project area is proposed for future construction of Leander Independent School District's Travisso School Project. This investigation was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 7093. No cultural resources sites were located, and no artifacts were collected. Field records will be curated at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory. Cultural resource clearance is recommended for the project.

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Management Summary

Atkins North America, Inc. (Atkins) was contracted by Leander Independent School District (LISD) to perform an intensive cultural resources survey of 23 acres (9.3 hectares) for the proposed Travisso School Project in northwestern Travis County, Texas. In compliance with the Antiquities Code of Texas, a Texas Antiquities Permit was obtained from the Texas Historical Commission, and the work was conducted under Permit No. 7093.

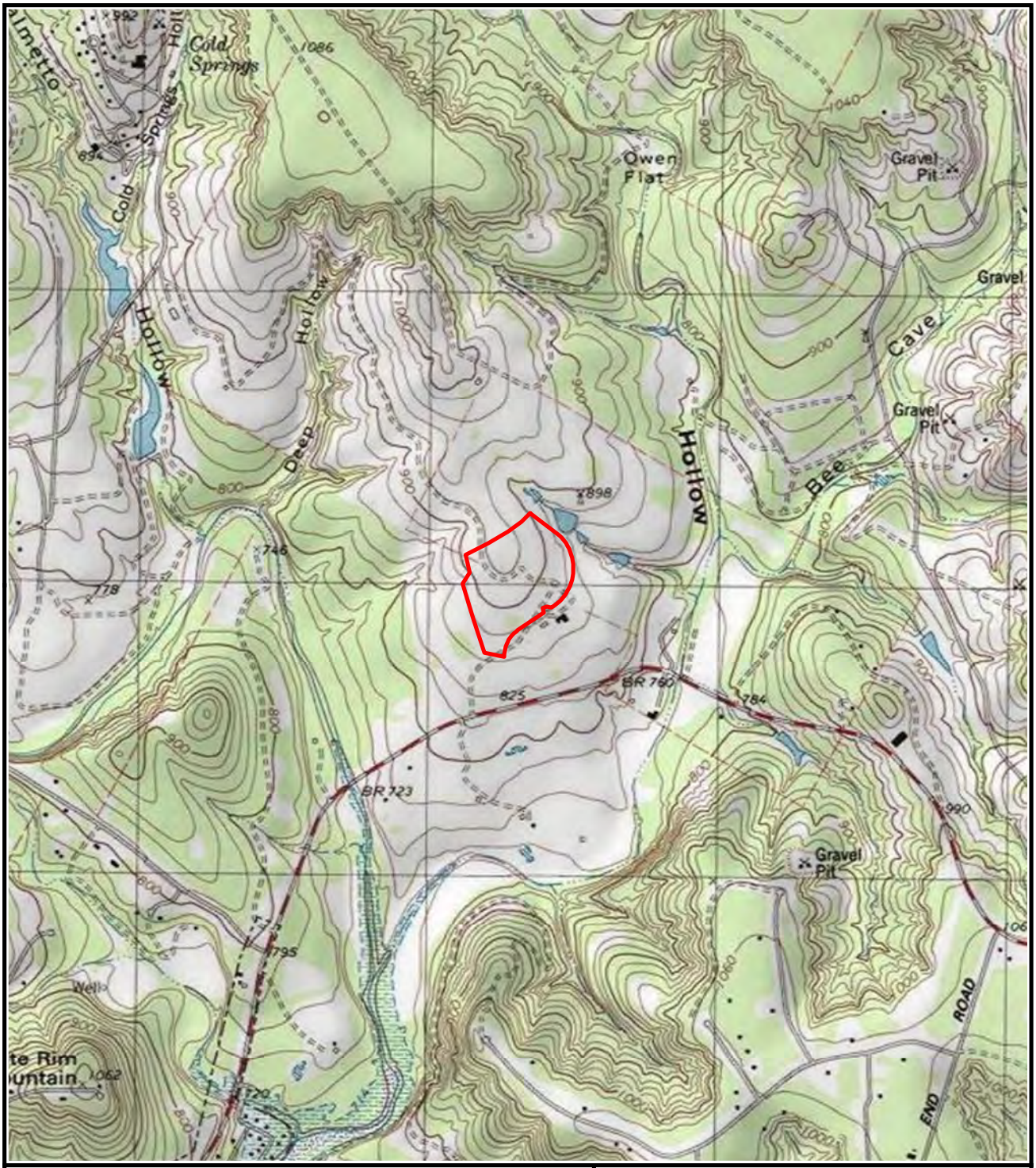
The field survey was conducted by Atkins archeologists Michael Smith and Russ Shortes over a period of 4 hours on December 5, 2014. Michael Smith acted as Principal Investigator and authored the report.

The project was represented by Jimmy Disler for LISD, and the Atkins project manager was Mark McNeal. Background research was conducted by Michael Nash and Michael Smith. Formatting was performed by Christine Vidrick, Myron Friedel drafted the report figures, and Russ Shortes provided quality control.

I. INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Leander Independent School District (LISD), Atkins North America, Inc. (Atkins) conducted a cultural resources investigation of the proposed Travisso School Project in northwestern Travis County, Texas, on December 5, 2014 (Figure 1). This consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey of a 23-acre (9.3-hectare) tract supplemented by shovel testing.

This study was performed in compliance with the Antiquities Code of Texas (Title 9, Chapter 191, Texas Natural Resources Code of 1977) and other appropriate cultural resources legislation and guidelines, as well as the guidelines set forth by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) the Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA). The purpose of the investigation was to locate, describe, document, and assess all existing cultural resources that would be affected by the proposed project. The investigation included a site records search, a review of historic maps and aerial photographs, and an intensive pedestrian survey, conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 7093. Due to the negative results of the survey, the Principal Investigator has chosen to use the CTA's recommended short report format.



Legend

Project Area

0 125 250 500 Meters

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

ATKINS

Figure 1
LISD Travisso School
Project Location Map
Leander, Texas

Nameless Quadrangle

Prepared By: frie8827	Scale: 1" = 2,000'
Job No.: 100043135	Date: 1/5/2015

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II. PROJECT SETTING

The proposed Travisso School project area is located on a narrow upland ridge formed by Bloody Hollow Creek and the conjoining Palmetto and Deep Hollow creeks. The former flows north-south roughly 400 meters (m) (1,312 feet [ft]) to east, while the junction of the latter two occurs approximately 650 m (2,132.5 ft) to the west. Though an ephemeral drainage borders the project area to the northeast, this comprises a series of man-made dams and likely would not have retained water before their construction. Across the 23-acre (9.3-hectare) tract, the surface elevation ranges from 265.2 to 277.4 m (870 to 910 ft), and back again, above mean sea level.

Geologically, the project area is underlain by the Glen Rose Formation of the Lower Cretaceous period, which consists of alternating beds of limestone, dolomite, and marl (Bureau of Economic Geology 1974). Soils within the project area are mapped as belonging primarily to the Brackett series of soils, rolling, with approximately 20 percent consisting of rock outcrops. The Brackett soils are inceptisols formed in residuum from the weathered limestone bedrock (United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service 1974:14–15), and are typically quite shallow, with Holocene deposits averaging only about 15.2 centimeters (cm) (6 inches) in depth.

III. METHODS

The primary goals of this investigation were to (1) locate any archeological resources that may exist within the area of potential effect; (2) assess their potential for State Antiquities Landmark (SAL) and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility; (3) assess the effect of the proposed construction on the located resources; and (4) provide site-specific recommendations for mitigation of adverse impact to any SAL- or NRHP-eligible properties or properties of unknown eligibility.

RECORDS REVIEW

Prior to field investigation, Atkins conducted a records search at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory and on the THC's Archeological Sites Atlas (Atlas). The records search aimed to identify previous cultural resource investigations and/or previously recorded cultural resource sites within 1 kilometer (km) (0.62 mile) of the project area. The search results included all recorded cultural resource sites as well as any sites listed in or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, or designated as a SAL. Historic maps catalogued within the Texas Historic Overlay (Foster et al. 2006) and historic aerial photographs (NETROnline 2014) were reviewed for indications of historic structures that may have been present in the proposed project area.

FIELD SURVEY

Atkins archeologists conducted an intensive, 100 percent pedestrian survey of the project area utilizing parallel pedestrian transects spaced approximately 30 m (98.5 ft) apart. Following CTA guidelines, shovel tests were not excavated on slopes greater than 20 percent or in areas with high ground surface visibility (greater than 30 percent). Shovel tests were excavated in 10-centimeter (cm) (3.9-inch) levels to a depth when clearly sterile substrates were encountered. All soil was screened through 6.3-milimeter (¼-inch) hardware cloth, and sediment color and texture were recorded. No artifacts were to be collected.

IV. RESULTS

RECORDS REVIEW

The records review identified only one prior cultural resources survey and one previously recorded archeological site located within 1 km (0.62 mile) of the current project area. In 1977, the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation conducted investigations for road improvements to Farm-to-Market Road (FM) 1431, which parallels the proposed project area roughly 250 m (820 ft) to the south (Atlas).

The nearest previously identified cultural site, 41TV149, lies 0.8 km (0.5 mile) southeast of the proposed project area immediately above a small feeder to Bloody Hollow Creek. Recorded in 1967, the site consists of a rockshelter and two large burned-rock midden deposits, which had been partially excavated by collectors (Polk 1967). These activities produced numerous lithic materials including chert knives, a chopper, and projectile points dating to the Late and Transitional Archaic periods. No formal determination of NRHP eligibility for this site has been made by the THC.

The historic maps review did not show the existence of historic structures within the proposed project area. Nor were any historic features or structures visible in historic aerial photographs.

FIELD SURVEY

At the time of the survey, the project area was sparsely vegetated by low grasses and cacti, with scattered stands of juniper trees (Figure 2). The ground surface across the tract was heavily eroded, and broken fragments of limestone were ubiquitous. Several two-track roads cross the property, and existing push piles of brush and limestone testify to the use of mechanical equipment in their construction. These cuts also demonstrate the shallow nature of the soil, having exposed the limestone bedrock in numerous places (Figure 3). Along the western margin of the ridge, the slopes frequently exceeded 20 degrees in elevation.

Legend

- Shovel Test
- Project Area

0 25 50 100 Meters

0 100 200 400 Feet

Aerial Source: Google Earth

ATKINS

Figure 2
LISD Travisso School
Aerial View of Project Area
Leander, Texas

Nameless Quadrangle

Prepared By: frie8827	Scale: 1" = 400'
Job No.: 100043135	Date: 1/5/2015

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Figure 3. Typical view of terrain, ground surface, and vegetation within the project area.

The tract was crossed by parallel pedestrian transects spaced roughly 30 m (98.5 ft) from one another. Due to the relative lack of soils and the sparseness of vegetation, ground surface visibility across the project area was very high, typically around 80 percent or higher. Six shovel tests were placed at the judgment of the Principal Investigator (see Figure 2), all of which proved negative for cultural materials and encountered bedrock at a maximum of 15 cm (5.9 inches) below ground surface (Table 1). This number is lower than the THC's Minimum Survey Standards for projects between 11 and 100 acres (4.5 and 40.5 hectares) in size due to the various environmental factors listed above. No artifacts or historic features were observed during the survey, nor were any chert resources, which would have been used for prehistoric stone tool production.

Table 1. Shovel Test Results

Field Test	Depth (cm)	Results	Munsell Color	Soil Texture	Termination
CS1	0–15	Negative	10YR 5/2 grayish brown	Rocky loam	Bedrock
CS2	0–10	Negative	10YR 5/2 grayish brown	Rocky loam	Bedrock
CS3	0–10	Negative	10YR 5/2 grayish brown	Rocky loam	Bedrock
CS4	0–5	Negative	10YR 5/2 grayish brown	Rocky loam	Bedrock
CS5	0–10	Negative	10YR 5/2 grayish brown	Rocky loam	Bedrock
CS6	0–15	Negative	10YR 5/2 grayish brown	Rocky loam	Bedrock

V. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No cultural resource sites were identified during Atkins' intensive pedestrian survey of the 23-acre (9.3-hectare) tract for LISD's proposed Travisso School Project. The absence of sites can probably be attributed to the lack of a reliable source of surface water nearby, the absence of lithic raw material resources within or near the project area, and the paucity of soil deposition. During the survey, the state standards for intensity of shovel tests for a project area of this size were not met due to the high degree of surface visibility and the shallow nature or absence of soil in the upland setting. As no cultural resources were located that are eligible or have an unknown eligibility for listing in the NRHP or for designation as a SAL, no further investigations are deemed necessary in association with the proposed project, and Atkins recommends cultural resources clearance.

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