

A PHASE I CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF THE EASTERWOOD
AIRPORT PROJECT IN CENTRAL BRAZOS COUNTY, TEXAS

Texas Antiquities Permit 2852

By

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PROJECT IN CENTRAL BRAZOS COUNTY, TEXAS

Brazos Valley Research Associates

Project Number 02-09

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ABSTRACT

An archaeological survey of 4.2 acre tract at Easterwood Airport in the city limits of College Station, Texas (central Brazos County) was conducted on May 10, 2002 by Brazos Valley Research Associates of Bryan, Texas. The Texas A&M University System proposes the construction of an asphalt drive and road as part of a greater project which will include a hangar just to the north of the current project area. Ground surface visibility was poor; therefore, the subsurface was examined through shovel testing. Overall, the area contains a shallow sandy mantle overlying hard clay, and at least two areas had been disturbed by heavy machinery. No archaeological sites were found in the project area, and it is recommended that construction be allowed to proceed as planned. Copies of the report are on file at the Texas Historical Commission, Archeology Division; Texas Archeological Research Laboratory; Brazos Valley Research Associates; and the Texas A&M University System, System Real Estate Office.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

BVRA was retained by the Texas A&M University System to conduct a Phase I cultural resources survey of a 4.2 acre tract in central Brazos County (Figure 1). The project, as currently planned, consists of the construction of an asphalt drive and roadway at Easterwood Airport. These improvements are depicted on Figure 2. The project area is depicted on the United States Geological Survey topographical map Wellborn dated 1961 and photorevised 1980 (Figure 3). The nearest water source to the project area is White Creek, approximately 2000 feet to the east, and a tributary of White Creek about 2000 feet to the west. The fieldwork was accomplished on May 10, 2002 under antiquities permit 2852.

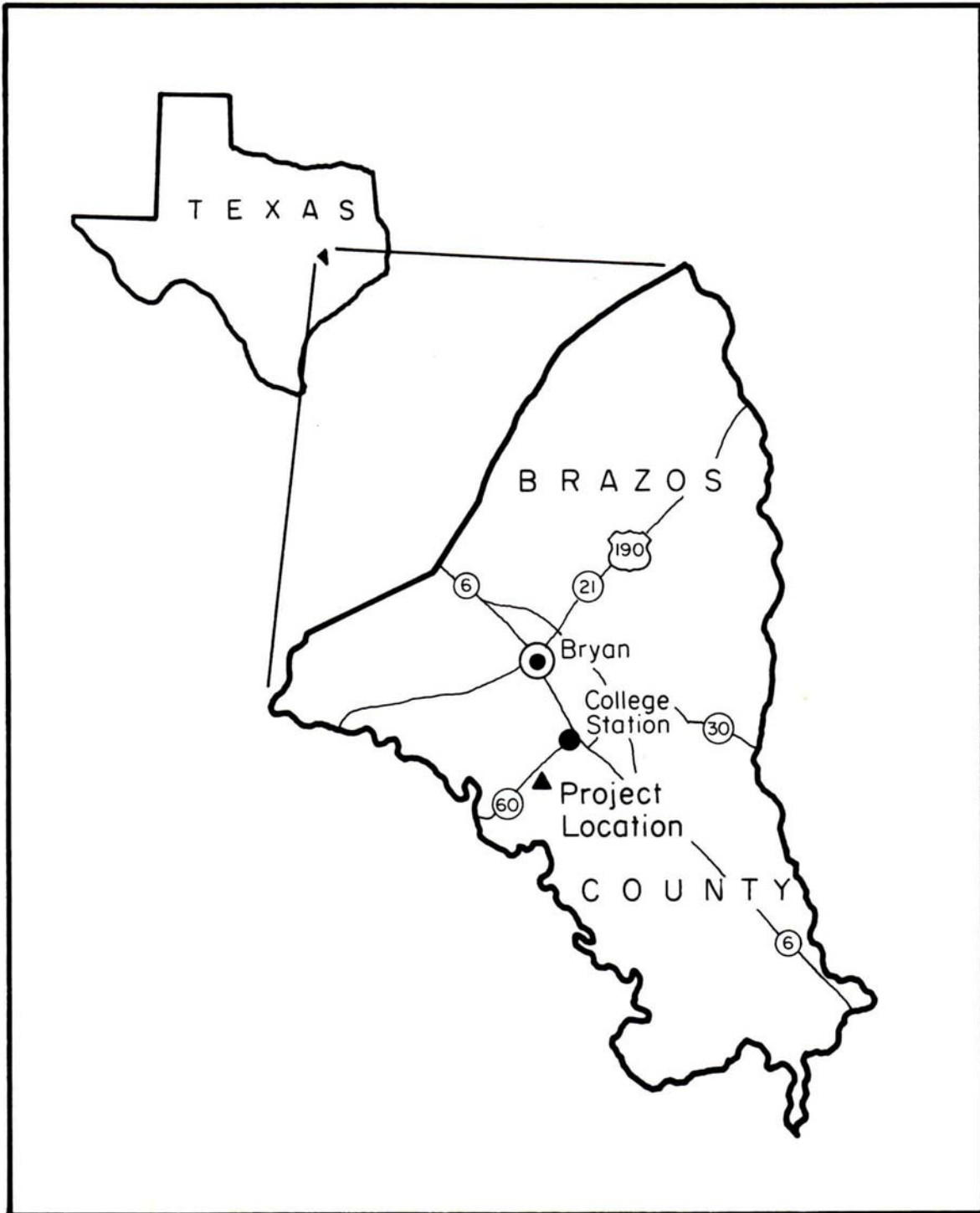


Figure 1. General Location Map

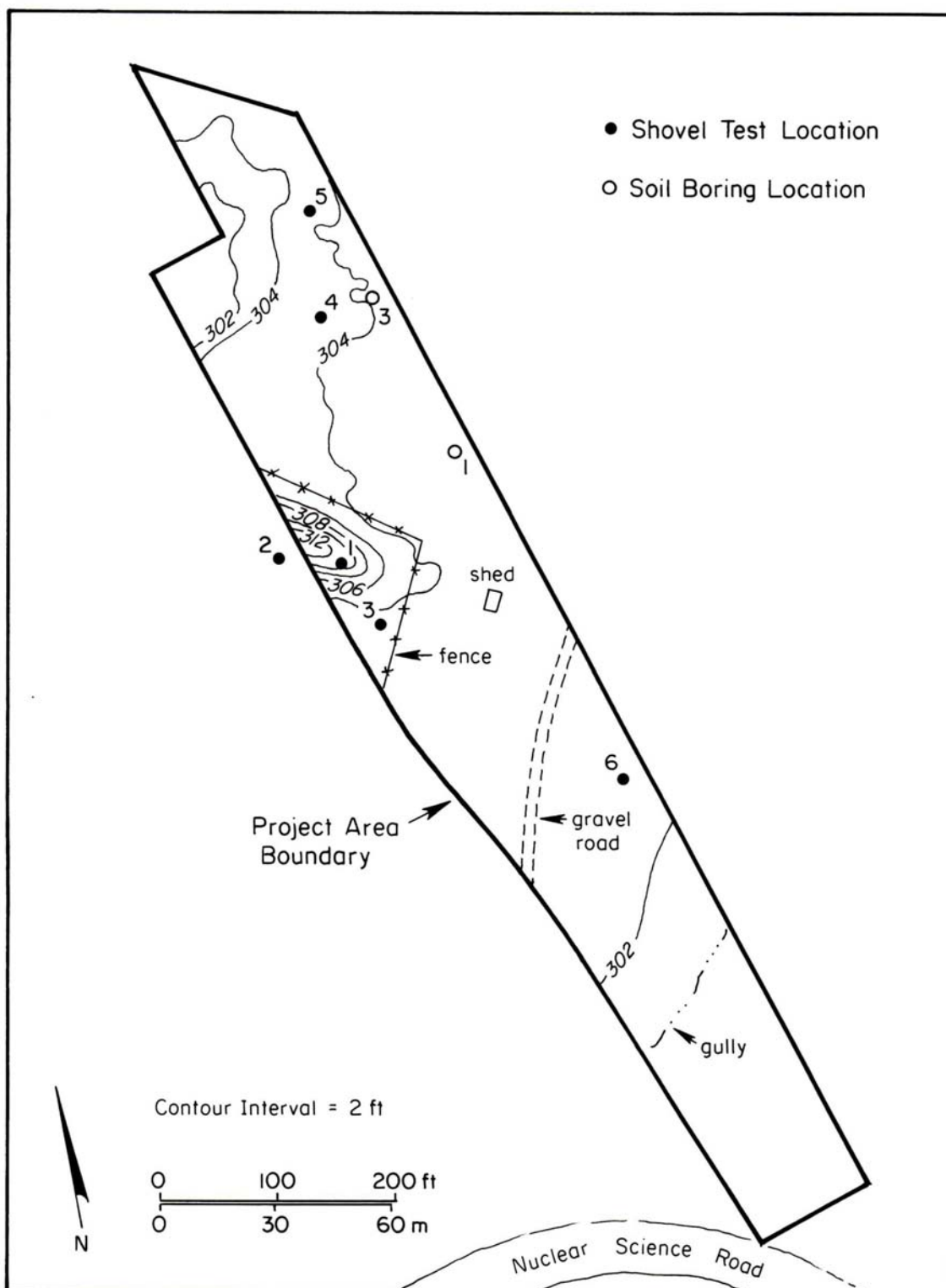


Figure 2. Project Area Map

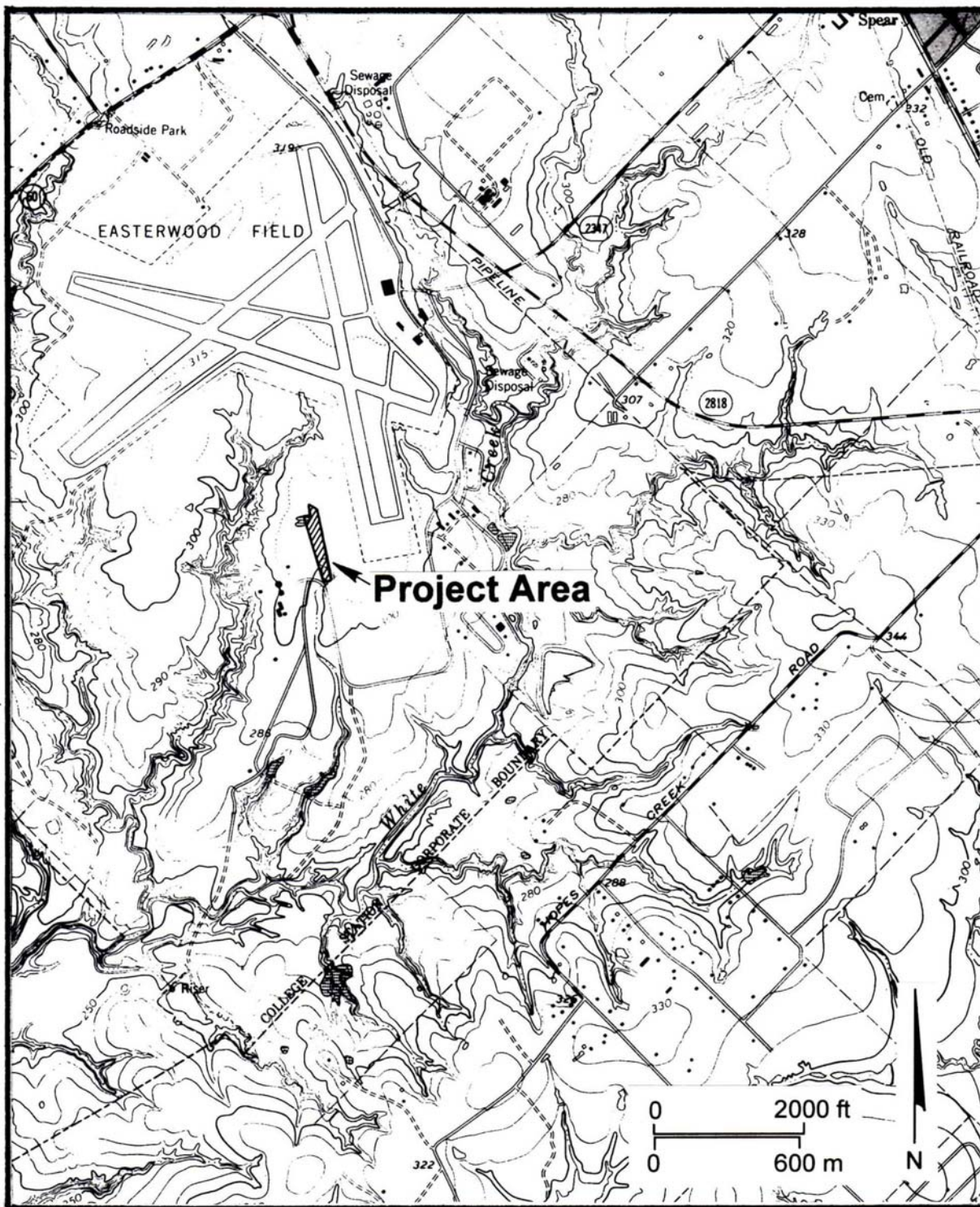


Figure 3. Project Area on Topographic Map Wellborn

PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

A check of the records at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) in Austin, Texas revealed no archeological sites have been recorded within the current project area. It was discovered that significant sites have been recorded in Brazos County, and several sites are present on the lower reaches of White Creek near the current project area. The current project area is situated between three previously surveyed areas.

Approximately 1300-1600 meters to the northeast are prehistoric sites 41BZ124 and 41BZ125 that were recorded as part of the George Bush Library project (Moore and Warren 1993). Site 41BZ124 produced flakes and pieces of animal bone believed to be recent. This is a small area on the west bank of White Creek that was described in the report as an intermittent campsite. Site 41BZ125 produced a projectile point, biface fragment, and several flakes. It was determined through shovel testing that this site had been destroyed, probably through road construction as only a few flakes were found in the project area. No additional work was recommended at either site.

Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) archaeologists recorded six sites (41BZ112 -41BZ117) in 1992 along White Creek 1000 or more meters to the southwest (Whitsett and Jurgens 1992). Of this number, all are prehistoric sites except 41BZ115 that contains a prehistoric and historic component. During the fall of 1992, archaeologists from Texas A&M University conducted surface survey and testing at prehistoric sites 41BZ112 and 41BZ114; and 41BZ115, a historic site with a prehistoric component (Thoms 1993). They are described in the report as insignificant lithic scatters that appear to be part of a widespread, low-density lithic procurement and manufacturing area that extends into the uplands beyond the project area boundaries. According to William A. Dickens (1993b:55), the lithic assemblages at these sites are small in number, but they represent most of the only upland limited activity sites to be tested in Brazos County and vicinity to date. Only two comprehensive lithic studies of sites in Brazos County have been conducted, both by William A. Dickens. The interested reader is referred to these works (Dickens 1993a, 1993b) for an in-depth review of the lithic artifacts from these sites.

Two prehistoric sites (41BZ137 and 41BZ138), approximately 1500 meters west of the current project area, were recorded by Victor Galan in 2000 (TARL site files). No report was found on file in the TARL library at the time of this survey. Site forms, however, indicate that Galan describes them as "unknown" prehistoric sites.

Prehistoric sites in Brazos County are typically found on sandy ridges and uplands in close proximity to dependable sources of water such as creeks and rivers. No prehistoric sites in the county have been reported on clay hills, active floodplains, or wetland areas.

METHODS

The project area was examined on May 10, 2002. William E. Moore served as the Principal Investigator and supervised the fieldwork with assistance from Lili Lyddon and Christine Brennecke. Surface visibility was poor throughout the project area, making shovel testing necessary. According to the engineering map provided by Madison Construction, there is a sandy ridge in the approximate center of the project area. Part of this area contains an artificially constructed mound that had been pushed by heavy machinery. One shovel test here revealed heavy clay at the surface. The survey crew then moved to the west and dug 1 shovel test along the natural surface of this landform that revealed hard yellow clay at 38 cm below the overlying sandy mantle. The western boundary was not flagged and not fenced; therefore, when the project area map was drafted it was learned that this shovel test was outside the project area. The four remaining shovel tests were dug randomly across the project area. Three of these produced heavy clay at the surface, and the other encountered 36 cm of sand overlying the clay. Because of thick ground cover, no surface inspection was made. The crew looked for signs of historic utilization but found only fences, modern power lines, and pushed earth.

Shovel tests were dug to clay when possible. The size of each test was 30 x 50 cm and varied in depth from 10 cm to 38 cm below the existing ground surface. All excavated fill was screened through 1/4 inch hardware cloth. The results of shovel testing were recorded on a shovel test log (Appendix I), and the approximate location of each test was plotted on a project area map prepared by McClure Engineering, Inc. of College Station, Texas (Figure 2). In all, 6 shovel tests were dug.

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Examination of the files at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory in Austin, Texas revealed no sites have been recorded in the project area. There was also no indication that any part of the project area had been surveyed by professional archaeologists. Archaeological sites are known to exist in the area; however, no evidence of prehistoric occupation was found. The soils in the project area contain heavy clay at or near the surface. These findings are consistent with earlier soil borings conducted by Rogers Engineering Services (2002). At two such borings in the project area (Figure 2) clay (boring 1) was found at the surface and below four inches of sand (boring 3). In two places, the project area has been disturbed through earth moving. They are an earthen hill and a pond. It is the opinion of Brazos Valley Research Associates that there are no significant archaeological sites within the current project area. Therefore, it is recommended that construction be allowed to proceed as planned.

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APPENDIX I: SHOVEL TEST LOG

Test	Depth	Results
01	10 cm	yellow clay at surface; no artifacts found
02	38 cm	yellow clay at 35 cm; no artifacts found
03	10 cm	yellow clay at surface; no artifacts found
04	36 cm	reddish clay at 30 cm; no artifacts found
05	10 cm	yellow clay at surface; no artifacts found
06	10 cm	yellow clay at surface; no artifacts found