

A PHASE I ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF A 15 ACRE TRACT:
THE ARBORS OF NACOGDOCHES HOUSING PROJECT
IN CENTRAL NACOGDOCHES COUNTY, TEXAS

By

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IN CENTRAL NACOGDOCHES COUNTY, TEXAS

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BVRA Project 98-05

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ABSTRACT

A Phase I archeological assessment of a 15 acre tract in central Nacogdoches County, Texas was performed in May 1998 by Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) of Bryan, Texas. This is a federal project regulated by the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) agency. The area examined is the site of a proposed apartment complex to be constructed by First Worthing Company of Dallas, Texas. No archaeological sites were found in the project area, and it is recommended that construction be allowed to proceed as planned.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following individuals are thanked for their participation in this project. The field survey was performed with the assistance of William J. Weaver. Andrew T. Carnahan of First Worthing Company provided maps and was cooperative throughout the project. William A. Martin of the Division of Antiquities Protection, Texas Historical Commission, served as the reviewer for the project. Carolyn Spock, Head of Records, at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) and her staff were very helpful during the site records investigation. Lili Lyddon of Lyddon Illustrations in Wellborn, Texas prepared the figures for publication in the main text of this report.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING	5
PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS.....	7
FIELD METHODS	9
RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS	10
RECOMMENDATIONS	11
REFERENCES CITED	12

Appendix I: Shovel Test Log

FIGURES

Figure 1. General Location Map.....	2
Figure 2. Project Area on Topographic Map.....	3
Figure 3. Project Area Map	4
Figure 4. Soils in Project Area.....	6

INTRODUCTION

This report documents the results of a Phase I archaeological survey of a 15 acre tract in central Nacogdoches County, Texas (Figure 1). This project is funded by the Housing and Urban Development Agency (HUD); therefore, an antiquities permit from the Division of Antiquities Protection was not required. The Principal Investigator for this project is William E. Moore. The project number assigned by BVRA is 98-05. It is the intention of First Worthing Company to construct a HUD apartment complex on this site, The Arbors of Nacogdoches. Although the actual area to be affected by construction is only 15 acres, First Worthing Company purchased a larger tract of 25 acres. The remaining 10 acres is heavily wooded and will not be developed.

The location of the project area in one of the original Texas counties (created in 1836 and organized in 1837) and the presence of two previously recorded prehistoric sites (41NA149 and 41NA150) in the vicinity suggested that the current project area is likely to contain significant prehistoric and/or historic sites. Therefore, a Phase I survey was required by the Division of Antiquities Protection, Texas Historical Commission. In order to satisfy this requirement, First Worthing Company retained Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) to perform the cultural resources survey. The project area is depicted on the Nacogdoches South 7.5' topographic quadrangle dated 1983 (Figure 2). Figures 2 and 3 depict the configuration of the project area, showing both the 15 acre project area surveyed and the total site of 25 acres.

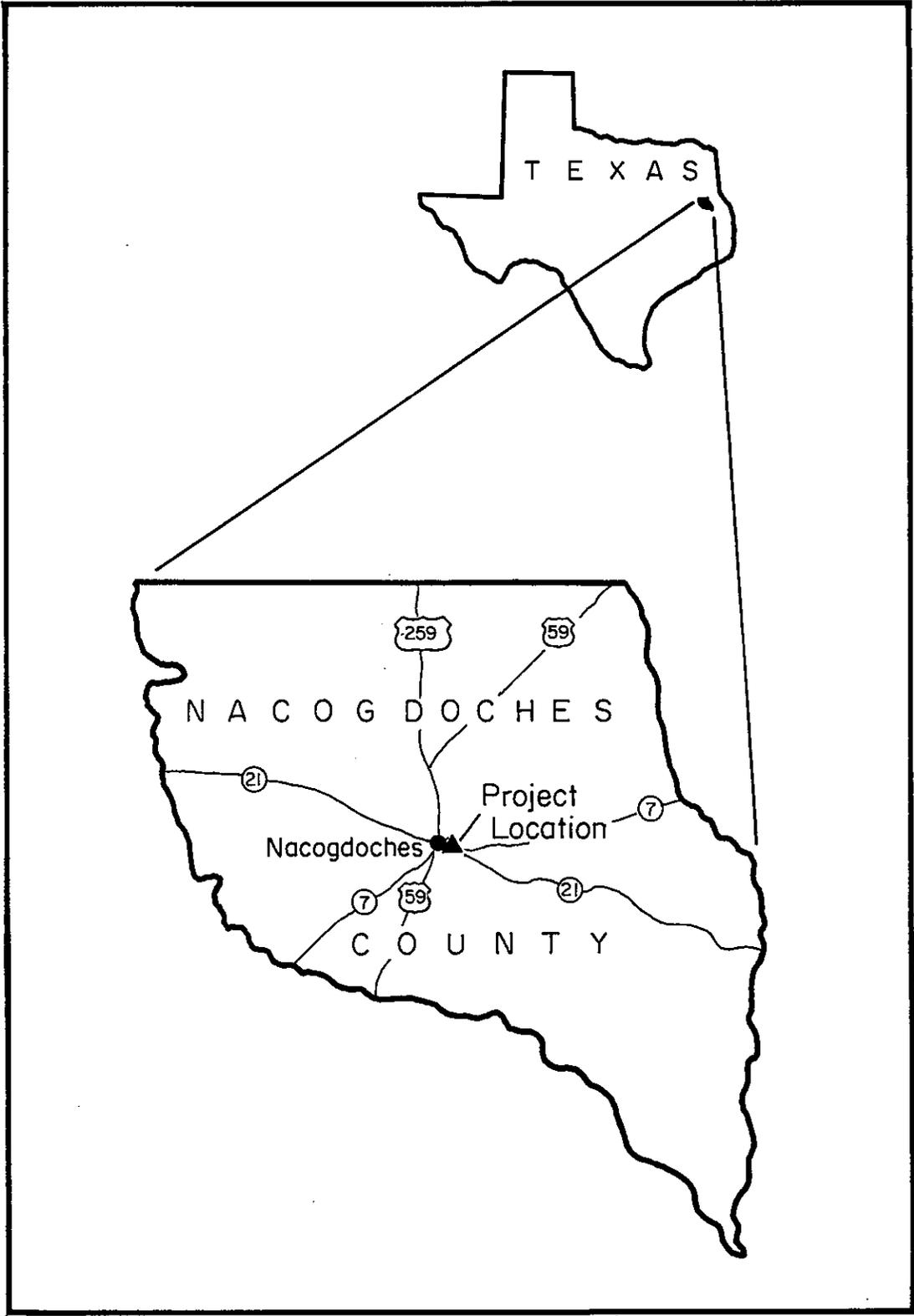


Figure 1. General Location Map.

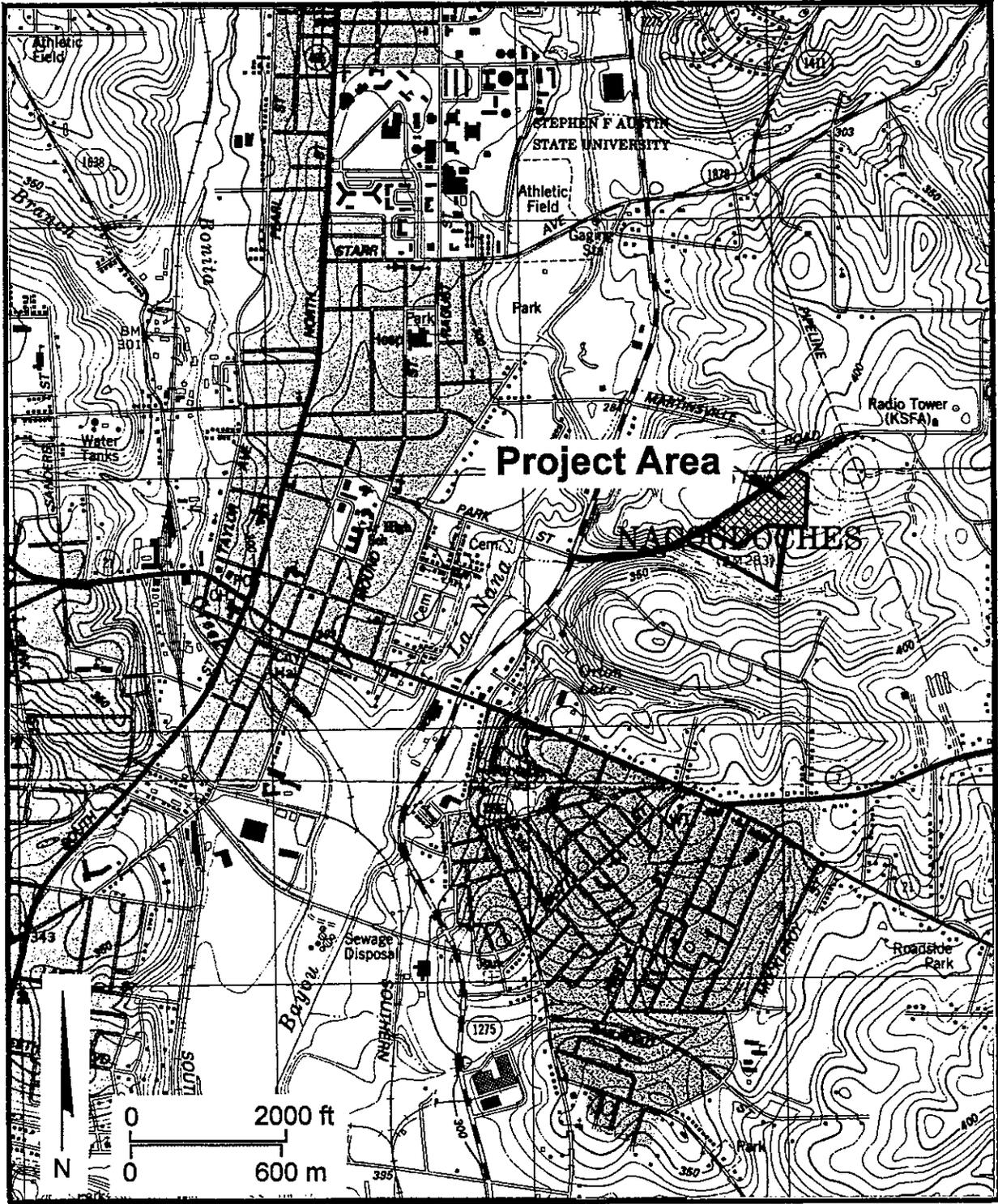


Figure 2. Project Area on Topographic Map.

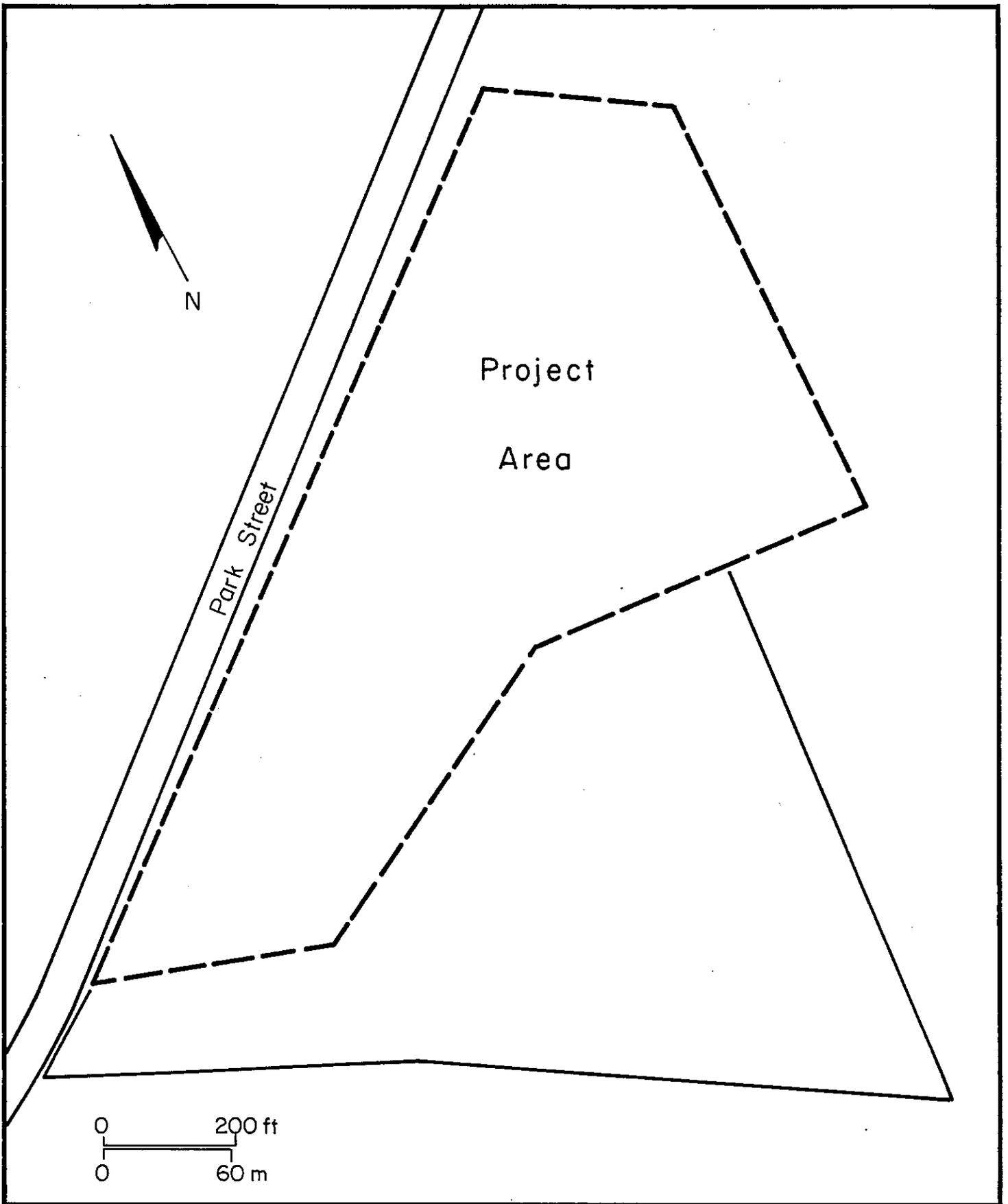


Figure 3. Project Area Map.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Nacogdoches County is located in the central part of East Texas. The county is roughly triangular and measures about 50 miles from northwest to southeast. It becomes narrower in the southeast at the confluence of the Angelina River and Attoyac Bayou. Overall, the land surface is nearly level to steep. Elevation ranges from about 130 feet above sea level in the southeastern part of the county to more than 725 feet in the northwestern part near Cushing. Nacogdoches County is 617,000 acres in size, including 17,816 acres of water (Dolezel 1980:1).

Nacogdoches County is in the East Texas Timberlands Land Resource Area. The main soils were formed beneath forest vegetation in a humid environment. Most soils are light colored and low in natural fertility. Nearly level areas are often wet, and steep sloping areas tend to erode easily. The entire county has a dendritic drainage system with many large streams. Large springs flow continuously in many sandy areas within the county (Dolezel 1980:1)

According to the Soil Survey of Nacogdoches County (Dolezel 1980:22-23), only one soil type is located within the project area (Figure 4). This soil is Darco loamy fine sand, 1 to 8 percent slopes. It is a deep, gently sloping to sloping upland soil on the highest lying landscapes in the county. Typically, the surface layer of this soil is loamy fine sand about 48 inches thick. It is brown in the upper part and pale brown in the lower part. The subsoil, to a depth of 80 inches, is a yellowish-red sandy clay loam that has brown mottles in the lower part. This soil is well drained, has moderate permeability, and low available water capacity. Runoff is slow due to the moderate permeability of the surface layer. The hazard of erosion is slight.

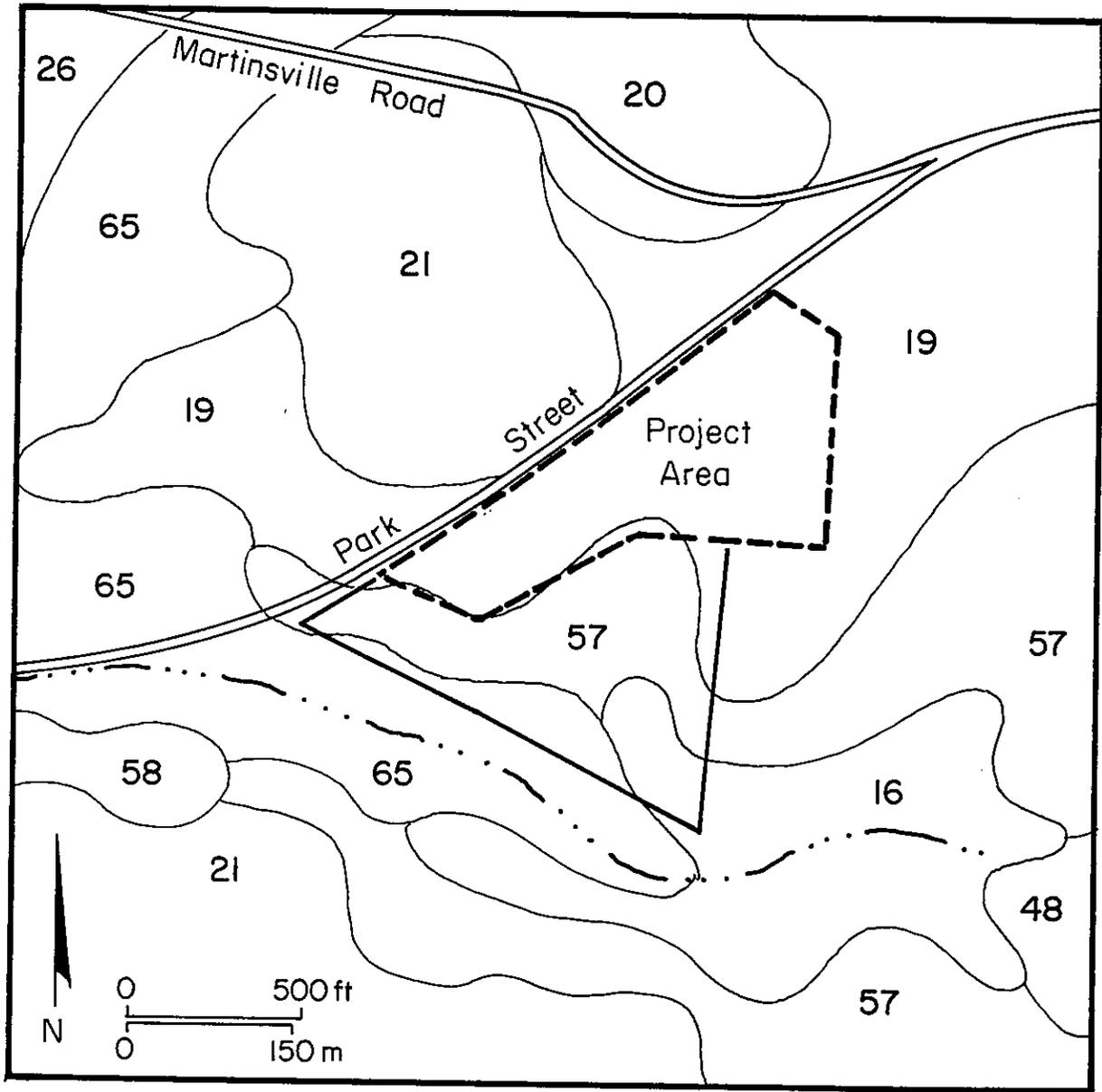


Figure 4. Soils in Project Area.

PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

Nacogdoches County is located in the Eastern Planning Region as defined by the Texas Historical Commission (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993). This region is divided into smaller units, and Nacogdoches County (based on this division) belongs to the Northeast Texas Study Region (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993:Figure 1.1.2). It is only one county removed from the Southeast Texas Archeological Study Region to the south. In 1991, 134 archaeological sites were known to exist in Nacogdoches County. Of this number, 36 were probably significant, 10 were significant, and the significance of 72 was unknown. Nacogdoches County contains significant sites dating from the Early Archaic through Caddoan and Late Prehistoric times and historic times. Researchers are encouraged to consult the planning document (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993) for more detailed information regarding Nacogdoches County and its relationship to East Texas. In addition, several publications by James E. Corbin are worth noting. They are an article on the Woodland/Caddo transition in the southern Caddo area (Corbin 1988), an article on Spanish-Indian interaction on the eastern frontier of Texas (Corbin 1989), a paper on locating the East Texas Spanish missions and presidios (Corbin 1990), and work at the Chayah site (Corbin et al. 1978).

According to a statistical overview prepared by the Office of the State Archeologist (Biesart et al. 1985), there were only 112 sites recorded in the county in 1985. At that time, the number of sites in the county represented .55% of the total for Texas and 4.67% of the region. In 1985, 0 sites in Washington County were listed as Paleoindian, 11 as Late Archaic, 28 as General Archaic, and 70 as Late Prehistoric. The majority of the prehistoric sites in the county experienced some form of disturbance such as erosion, construction, and vandalism. Six sites were reported to be destroyed. Two sites (numbers not given) were excavated, 14 were tested by hand, 2 tested by machine, and 103 were surface collected. A variety of prehistoric site types have been identified in the county to include sites with architectural features (postholes, postmolds, pits), subsistence related features (hearths, burned rock, midden soil, refuse dumps), social/ceremonial related features (burials, earthworks, caches, hearths, rock art), and technology related features (quarries, manufacturing areas).

A background check at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) in Austin, Texas by the Principal Investigator revealed that two potentially significant prehistoric sites (41NA149 and 41NA150) have been recorded in the vicinity of the current project area. Site 41NA149 is located on the west end of a high landform (365 feet above sea level) overlooking Bayou La Nana to the west. This site is on the north side of Park Street approximately 150 meters northwest of the extreme western end of the current project area and about 200 meters east of University Avenue. It was first identified by Bill Young who found a *San Patrice* point, two *Albany Scrapers*, and an untyped potsherd on the site surface (TARL site files). It is listed on the site form as probably Archaic. Mr. Young reported the site that was later recorded by K. E. Sparkes of Stephen F. Austin State University. This site has been destroyed by construction of an apartment complex.

Site 41NA150 is located on the west end of a high landform (370 feet above sea level) overlooking Bayou La Nana to the west. This site is on the north side of Park Street approximately 300 meters from the center of the northern boundary (Park Street) of the current project area and less than 100 meters from Martinsville Road to the north. It was first identified by Bill Young who found three sandy paste sherds, grog-tempered sherds (number not stated), three dart oints, one scraper, four large flakes, two small fragments of worked silicified wood, and one silicified wood cobble on the site surface (TARL site files). It is listed on the site form as dating to the Archaic and Caddo time periods. Mr. Young reported the site that was later officially recorded by K. E. Sparkes of Stephen F. Austin State University. This site has been destroyed by construction of the Ridgemeont Condominiums.

FIELD METHODS

Prior to entering the field the site records at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) on the campus of The University of Texas at Austin were checked for the presence of previously recorded sites in the project area. Although no sites were found in the project area, two previously recorded prehistoric sites were found to have been recorded on the same landform as the current project area.

The field survey was conducted on May 12, 1998 with William E. Moore acting as Principal Investigator with assistance from William J. Weaver. The project area was clear with the only substantial vegetation being immature pine trees, various shrubs, and large numbers of berry vines. The surface visibility was estimated at 90% over most of the project area, making survey transects easy. First, the surveyors walked over the entire 15 acre tract in an attempt to identify surface indications of any archaeological sites which might be present. During the pedestrian survey 20 shovel probes were excavated. The probes were dug to clay or sandstone bedrock, shallow, and not screened. They were noted in the field journal, and no attempt to plot them on the project area map was made. Virtually all of the project area had been disturbed by borrowing of sand, and a hard reddish-yellow clay and sandstone was visible on the surface of much of the area examined. The project area was documented by color photography (35 mm prints).

Finally, five shovel tests (ST) were excavated along the southern boundary of the project area where sand had not been removed, although this area was also disturbed through pushing and scraping by heavy machinery. The shovel tests varied in depth from 20 to 85 cm, were dug to clay, and were sterile (Appendix I). The soil was checked against a Munsell chart and found to contain a yellow soil (10YR 7/8) overlying a strong brown soil (7.5YR 5/6) just above the reddish-yellow clay.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The archival search at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory revealed no previously recorded prehistoric sites in the project area. Two prehistoric sites (41NA149 and 41NA150) were found to be on the same landform within 200 meters of the current project area. Both sites have been destroyed by apartment construction; however, the number and types of artifacts found at these sites suggests that they were potentially significant.

The entire 15 acre tract was carefully examined by a surface inspection and subsurface investigation utilizing shovel tests and probes. It was immediately determined that the 15 acre tract had been severely disturbed through sand borrowing, and the possibility of *in situ* cultural materials is very low. No artifacts, except modern trash, were observed on the highly disturbed site surface.

The non-surveyed area (10 acres) is heavily wooded and is apparently undisturbed. Part of this tract is on a terrace overlooking a tributary of Bayou La Nana to the south. This area appears to have deep sandy soils and may contain archaeological materials. This is the only undisturbed part of the 25 acre project area examined by BVRA on May 12, 1998.

In summary, the entire 15 acres has been disturbed to the extent that any existing sites have been destroyed or removed as no cultural materials were observed anywhere within the project area. The remaining 10 acres appears to be undisturbed and may contain intact deposits of cultural materials belonging to prehistoric or historic utilization of the project area. Given the presence of two prehistoric sites in the vicinity, it is hypothesized that the remaining 10 acres are medium to high probability for site occurrence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No evidence of a prehistoric or historic site was found in the 15 acre project area. It is believed that the 25 shovel tests and probes adequately assessed the tract. Therefore, it is recommended that First Worthing Company, Inc. be allowed to proceed with construction as planned. Should, however, evidence of any site, prehistoric or historic, be encountered during construction all work must cease until the situation can be resolved by the Division of Antiquities Protection, Texas Historical Commission in consultation with First Worthing Company, Inc. and Brazos Valley Research Associates. In the event First Worthing Company decides to develop the remainder of the 25 acre tract it is recommended that the undisturbed 10 acres not investigated during this project be subjected to a Phase I cultural resources survey.

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APPENDIX I: SHOVEL TEST LOG

Test	Depth	Results
01	70 cm	sterile
02	85 cm	sterile
03	05 cm	sterile
04	20 cm	sterile
05	40 cm	sterile
