A Report Prepared for:

Union Planters Bank
835 Georgia Avenue
Chattanooga, TN 37402

A Phase I Archaeological Survey of a Parcel at the Southeast Corner of Cowart and West Thirteenth Street Chattanooga, Tennessee

Prepared by:

R. Bruce Council
Research Associate

[Signature]
Nicholas Honerkamp PhD
Principal Investigator

The Jeffrey L. Brown Institute of Archaeology
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
615 McCallie Avenue
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37403

May 2002
Abstract

In response to a request by the Union Planters Bank of Chattanooga, Tennessee, the Jeffrey L. Brown Institute of Archaeology, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, conducted a Phase I archaeological survey of a parcel of land situated at the southeast corner of Cowart and West Thirteenth Streets in the downtown area of Chattanooga. The purpose of the survey was to determine if archaeological resources potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places were present on the parcel, consonant with provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Documentary research on the property was limited to inspection of readily available historic maps and fire insurance plats of the property that illustrated the nature of improvements or other land uses through time. The cartographic overview permitted identification of features for targeted excavation in the field. Research suggests that the property was vacant until the mid-1880s. A small structure at the southeast corner of the project area is illustrated on Sanborn fire insurance maps in 1885, and an historic aerial view of 1886 also depicts the structure. The building was a warehouse associated with the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad. This structure was razed c. 1888 and two new one-story utility railroad structures were erected along the tracks situated south of the project area. These structures were associated with the Alabama Great Southern Railroad. These two structures were razed by 1917 and the project area remained vacant until 1954-69, during which period a small tin-clad utility building was erected on the railroad frontage of the lot.

Archaeological survey of the parcel consisted of the excavation of three backhoe search trenches at 10m (33') intervals across the width of the trapezoidal lot. The trenches were two feet (0.6m) in width and carried to a uniform depth of five feet (1.5m). Unstable soils and groundwater flooding of the trenches prevented detailed recording of soil stratigraphy and features. Two limestone wall foundations and one abandoned 24” ceramic sewer line were encountered during the testing. The wall foundations appear to be associated with the c. 1885 railroad warehouse. Soil stratigraphy was dominated by deep accumulations of coal cinder and clinker, and deposits of mixed, redeposited clays and brick rubble.

Further secondary testing of the property does not appear to be warranted, and additional cultural resource management actions are not recommended prior to redevelopment of the parcel.
Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. i
List of Figures ....................................................................................................................... ii
List of Tables ......................................................................................................................... ii
Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1
Methodology .......................................................................................................................... 1
Documentary Research .......................................................................................................... 3
Archaeological Survey .......................................................................................................... 11
Laboratory Analysis .............................................................................................................. 13
Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations ................................................................. 15
References Cited .................................................................................................................... 16

List of Figures

Figure 1. Site location map .................................................................................................... 1
Figure 2. Detail of project area ............................................................................................. 4
Figure 3. Detail from Dorr’s “Chattanooga and Its Approaches” (1863) ....................... 5
Figure 4. Detail from “Plat of J.C. Stanton’s Subdivision (1873) ................................ 6
Figure 5. Detail from Sanborn maps 1885 ....................................................................... 7
Figure 6. Detail from Sanborn maps 1901 ..................................................................... 8
Figure 7. Detail from Sanborn maps 1917 .................................................................... 9
Figure 8. Detail from Chattanooga flood control sheet 1-3 .......................................... 10
Figure 9. Trench 1 recording in progress ...................................................................... 12

List of Tables

Table 1. Artifact summary ................................................................................................. 14
Introduction

In response to a request for proposal from the Union Planters Bank of Chattanooga, Tennessee, the Jeffrey L. Brown Institute of Archaeology, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (hereafter, the "Institute"), prepared a technical proposal and budget for the performance of a Phase I archaeological survey of a .187 acre parcel adjoining the southeast corner of the intersection of West Thirteenth Street and Cowart Street in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee. The contract was performed in compliance with provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, at the instance of the Tennessee Historical Commission ("THC") and the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer ("TSHPO").

Nicholas Honerkamp, Ph.D., director of the Institute, served as Principal Investigator of the project. R. Bruce Council, M.A., Research Associate, served as archaeologist in direct charge (project director).

The project locality is shown in Figure 1. The project area is bounded on the west by Cowart Street; on the north by West Thirteenth Street; on the east by property owned by Austin Real Estate; and on the site by a railroad track and right-of-way.

Methodology

The Institute proposed to conduct a brief documentary overview of the property; to systematically field-test the property for buried cultural resources; and to prepare a report of findings of suitable professional quality for submission by the project sponsor to the THC and TSHPO.

One day of documentary research by the project director consisted of examination of a series of manuscript maps, published maps, aerial views and fire insurance and real estate plats encompassing the project area through time. The objective of the cartographic review was to provide documentation of historic land uses in the project area and to provide targets for archaeological field-testing. Map resources were available at the Jeffrey L. Brown Institute of Archaeology and the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library in Chattanooga. The Tennessee Division of Archaeology's state site files were consulted for the location of contiguous, recorded archaeological sites. A limited number of secondary sources were consulted for historical context.

The objective of archaeological field testing was to determine if significant features or deposits were present on the property. Fieldwork consisted of three systematically-spaced backhoe search trenches excavated across the width of the property. Soil stratigraphy and cultural features were observed, and artifact collections were made opportunistically.
Figure 1. Site location map. The project area is circled. From the U.S.G.S./T.V.A. Chattanooga Quadrangle, 7.5 minute topographic series 105-SE, edition of 1969, photorevised 1976.
Documentary Research

The limited documentary research on the project area consisted largely of examination of a series of maps and views of urban Chattanooga through time. These maps, plats and views documented, in general terms, historic land use of the parcel and illustrated physical improvements that could be targeted during field-testing. A small number of secondary sources were also reviewed, but no detailed, exhaustive historical documentation was conducted on the parcel.

The situation of the project area is shown in Figure 2. The tract is bound on the north by West Thirteenth Street; on the east by a structure and lot owned by Austin Real Estate; on the south by a railroad track and right-of-way; and on the west by Cowart Street. The lot is trapezoidal in shape, with a maximum frontage on the railroad right-of-way of 141.53 feet (43.1m) and a depth off West Thirteenth Street of 77.30 feet (23.6m).

The current elevation of the property is around 669’ ASL. This lot was inundated by flooding of the Tennessee River in 1867, 1875 and 1886, and marginally flooded in 1917, based on compiled flood records (TVA 1959: 21).

Historically, the project area lies south of the original urban core of Chattanooga and its origins at Ross’s Landing. In the antebellum period, the area south of Ninth Street, now M. L. K. Boulevard, was principally occupied by the railyards associated with numerous regional railroads that had terminal stations at Chattanooga. The earliest topographic map of Chattanooga was drawn by U. S. Coast Survey cartographer F. W. Dorr in 1863 for purposes of documenting the Union and Confederate positions and fortifications during the battles for Chattanooga in November of that year (Figure 3). The map shows the layout of the principal railroad rights-of-way at the south end of town, and does not illustrate any structures on the project area at that date. The only cultural feature shown is a railroad spur approaching the project area from the west. This spur halted on the west side of what would later become Cowart Street.

After breaking the Confederate siege of the town in November 1863, Federal forces transformed Chattanooga into a marshalling yard for the march against Atlanta. The United States Military Railroad undertook considerable construction in Chattanooga in 1864-5. Archaeological investigations to the north of the project area documented numerous sub-surface survivals of USMR structures, and maps of their constructions in the north end of Chattanooga have survived. Unfortunately, copies of USMR maps of improvements in the southern end of the town have not survived (Council and Honerkamp 1984: 22).
Figure 2. Detail of project area, adapted from Chattanooga flood control sheet 1-3, 1969, (T.V.A.). This plan is oriented north.
Figure 3. Detail from F. W. Dorr's "Chattanooga and Its Approaches," (1863). The project area is circled.

The perspective drawing "Bird's Eye View of Chattanooga" by A. Ruger of St. Louis, drawn 1871, shows a series of structures situated between Union Street (W. 13th) and the railroad right-of-way to the south. These are railroad terminal structures of the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad. These buildings are shown in plan on a plat drawn in 1873 of the J. C. Stanton sub-division (Figure 4). At that date, the project area, at the west end of the railroad structures, was still vacant.
At some time prior to 1885, a small structure was erected on the project area at the west end of the Austin building. This structure, shown in plan on the 1885 edition of the Chattanooga fire insurance maps produced by the Sanborn company, was of one-story height and roughly 25 feet by 30 feet in size. The structure is identified as a railroad warehouse (Figure 5). This is the earliest historic-period structural target on the project area. The building is apparently associated with the Alabama Great Southern Railway.
Figure 5. Detail from Sheet 15 of the fire insurance maps of Chattanooga published by the Sanborn Map and Publishing Company (1885). A small railroad warehouse is situated on the east side of the project area, but the western portion — fronting on Divine, now Cowart Street, is vacant. This view faces north-northwest.

The Norris, Wellge and Company's bird's eye view of Chattanooga shows a perspective view of the structures detailed on the 1885 Sanborn (Norris, Wellge and Company 1886). The 1889 edition of Sanborn maps illustrates substantial changes to the structures between Union Street and the railroad right-of-way to the south with the creation of the Central Passenger Station (Sanborn-Perris Map Company 1889). A substantial iron train shed extending from Market Street west to Cowart Street covered the railroad tracks to facilitate passenger unloading. This train shed and the adjoining passenger terminal are shown in Steinberg (1976: 15). These new passenger facilities opened in 1888. Details of structures in the project area on the Sanborn maps of 1889 are unfortunately split between two sheets, and are uninformative as to what improvements were there at that date.

The 1901 Sanborn maps show the details of the Central Passenger Station and the improvements in the project area at the western end of the terminal complex (Sanborn-Perris Map Company 1901). The c. 1885 warehouse on the east side of the property had evidently been demolished and replaced with a narrower, longer structure of unidentified function. To the west of this structure was a one-story building containing a vertical boiler. A railroad spur ran the length of the lot parallel to Union (W. 13th) Street.
Figure 6. Detail from the 1901 edition of the Sanborn insurance maps of Chattanooga. Two small utilitarian railroad structures appear in the project area at the western (left) end of the Central Passenger Depot building complex. Best available copy from microfilm. Sanborn-Perris Map Company (1901: Sheet 20).

The 1917 edition of the Sanborn maps indicates that all structures in the project area shown on the 1901 plans had been removed, leaving the project area vacant. The railroad spur that had crossed the middle of the lot had been truncated to the edge of Cowart Street. The massive train shed that had covered the tracks to the south of the depot had also been removed, and the remaining structures along Union (W. 13th) were associated with paper businesses (Figure 7). This configuration — the absence of buildings on the project area — remained the same on the Chadwick real estate plat book of Chattanooga drawn in 1918 (Chadwick 1928: Plate 4), and the Sanborn maps of 1949 and 1954 (Sanborn Map Company 1949: Sheet 58; 1954: Sheet 58).
Figure 7. Detail from the 1917 edition Sanborn maps of Chattanooga. At this date the project area, at the southeast corner of Cowart and Union (now W. 13th Street) was vacant. Sanborn Map Company (1917: Sheet 58). This view faces north-northeast.

TVA flood control maps of Chattanooga depict a small shed erected along the railroad right-of-way, evidently built between 1954-1969 (Figure 8). This utility structure was removed prior to archaeological testing.

In 1992 the project area was included with the boundary of the Market and Main Streets Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places. At that time, there was no architecture on the project area that was either a contributing or non-contributing element.
Figure 8. Detail from Chattanooga flood control sheet 1-3, TVA (1969). In this view, only a small utility shed appears on the project area. This plan faces north.
Archaeological Survey

The Tennessee Division of Archaeology state site files contain only one recorded archaeological site within 2km of the project area. This is site 40Ha482, an urban historic site adjacent to Market Street one block west of the project area. Substantial archaeological investigations occurred two blocks to the north of the project area in 1980-81 during demolition and grading activities associated with construction of the TVA office complex (Council and Honerkamp 1984) but no site file forms were filed with the state.

Prior to archaeological testing, the metal-clad building on the property was removed. This shed, built between 1954 and 1969, was utilitarian in nature and of insubstantial construction.

Archaeological testing on the property consisted of the excavation of three backhoe search trenches parallel to the east property line adjoining the Austin building and perpendicular to the railroad right-of-way. Trenches 1 and 2 extended from the south (railroad) lot boundary north 20m (66’), stopping short of buried utilities under or adjacent to the sidewalk along W. 13th Street. Trench 3 extended from the south boundary north 10m (33’), being confined by the angle of Cowart Street.

All backhoe trenches were 2.0 feet (60cm) in width and excavated to a uniform depth of five feet or 1.5m. Trench 1 was excavated along a line five meters west of the east property line. Trenches 2 and 3 were spaced at ten-meter intervals to the west.

Trench 1 stratigraphy was dominated in the upper levels by highly-compacted coal cinder and clinker deposits that were frequently cemented together. The basal levels were mixed clays containing brick debris. The trench began to accumulate ground water rapidly after excavation and only superficial stratigraphic observations could be made. Two limestone wall foundations were intercepted by this north-south trench. Feature 1, in the southern end of the trench, was relatively intact, and consisted of a random-course ashlar limestone wall bonded with a soft, decayed coarse river-sand and lime mortar. The foundation was 1.5 feet (45cm) in width and ran perpendicular to the orientation of the trench. Feature 3 was located at the mid-section of the trench and was also a random-course ashlar wall foundation employing cut limestone blocks of varying thicknesses and dimensions. This foundation could not be cleaned and observed closely due to trench flooding.
From outside to outside, Features 1 and 3 were 9.2m apart or 30.1 feet. This dimension corresponds with the scaled width of the railroad warehouse noted on the 1885 Sanborn maps. In the mixed clay stratum at the base of the profile was scattered brick rubble which included hand-made, recessed-panel brick fragments. This stratum is inferred to be from demolition of the structure between 1885 and 1901.

The bulk of the soils over the mixed clay and brick rubble stratum consisted of layers of coal cinder, clinker and ash. Frequently, these materials were naturally cemented together due to compression. The lower levels of this fill, however, were unstable.

Trench 2 produced one feature at a depth of 4.5 feet (1.3m) in the north end of the unit. Feature 2 was an abandoned storm or sanitary sewer main of 24" diameter. The pipe was of unglazed ceramic composition. Disturbed, redeposited clays at the basal levels of the soil profiles contained brick rubble similar to that in Trench 1.
Trench 3 did not intercept any features, and displayed the same stratigraphy as the adjoining units: basal disturbed clays with brick rubble, followed by horizontally-bedded deposits of coal cinder and clinker.

With the exception of brick debris in the basal levels of all the units, artifacts were sparse, and no distinct, compact layers of historic midden were observed. A light scatter of domestic artifacts from the cinder fill layer was observed and opportunistic examples collected. These materials included bottle glass, roofing slate and cut nails. Five field specimen catalog numbers were opened.

For public safety concerns, the trenches were immediately backfilled after nominal recording was completed.

Deeper testing, which would have required widening and stepping the backhoe cut to meet OSHA safety standards, was desirable, but unstable baulks and accumulating ground water mitigated against this approach. Despite these limitations, an adequate assessment of archaeological resources on the property was completed.

**Laboratory Analysis**

Artifacts recovered from the test excavations were processed at the laboratory of the Institute in Brock Hall on the UTC campus. Recovered materials are summarized in Table 1. Artifacts are curated at the Archaeological Collections storage room, Guerry Hall, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Records generated during the archaeological survey are permanently curated at the Institute. Theses records consist of narrative field notes, field specimen catalog, photo log notes, artifact inventory forms, 35mm color slides, and digital images.
Table 1. Artifact summary, Cowart Street archaeological survey.

**FSN 1: Trench 1 - Mixed clays and brick rubble stratum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact class/type description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common, hand-made brick fragments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recessed-panel, hand-made brick fragments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetite iron ore fragment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FSN 2: Trench 1 - Upper cinder stratum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact class/type description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear container glass fragments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window glass fragments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porcelain electrical insulator, tube</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roofing slate fragments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron plate fragment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FSN 3: Trench 1 - Lower cinder stratum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact class/type description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear molded bottle glass, necks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown dip-molded bottle base, improved pontil scar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aqua glass insulator fragment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square cut nail</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine (?) bark fragments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FSN 4: Trench 2 - Lower cinder stratum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact class/type description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iron railroad spike</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear molded bottle glass, neck</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FSN 5: Trench 3 - Mixed clays and brick rubble stratum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact class/type description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recessed-panel, hand-made brick fragments</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Documentary investigation of the project area indicated that the project area was vacant, unutilized land until c. 1885, when a small warehouse constructed by the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad was constructed in the southeast corner of the lot adjacent to the railroad tracks. This apparent brick structure was demolished prior to 1901, at which time two utility structures had been built along the railroad right-of-way. These structures, owned by the Alabama Great Southern Railroad, had been demolished by 1917. The project area remained vacant until the erection of a tin-clad utility structure in the period 1954-69.

Archaeological testing consisted of the excavation of three backhoe search trenches across the width of the lot. Recording of strata and features was constrained by unstable profiles and groundwater. Two limestone foundations were exposed in one trench, and are attributed the railroad warehouse shown in plans and views dated 1885-6. Soil profiles evidenced the accumulation of over a meter of coal cinder and clinker deposits. Basal portions of soil profiles contained brick rubble associated with the demolition of the 1885 warehouse.

Documentary research and archaeological testing does not suggest the presence of significant cultural features or deposits within the project area, and further research is not recommended. Fieldwork indicates that cultural resources potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places will not be impacted by proposed redevelopment of the parcel.
References Cited

Published Sources

Chadwick, C. W.

Council, R. Bruce and Nicholas Honerkamp
1984 The Union Railyards Site: Industrial Archaeology in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The Tennessee Valley Authority Publications in Anthropology, No. 38.

Norris, Wellge and Company

Ruger, A.

Sanborn Map and Publishing Company

Sanborn Map Company

Sanborn-Perris Map Company Ltd.
1889 Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company Ltd.

1901 Chattanooga, Tennessee. Sanborn-Perris Map Company Ltd.

Steinberg, David H.
1976 Pardon Me, Is That the Chattanooga Choo-Choo: The Development of Passenger Train Facilities in Chattanooga. Published by the author, Chattanooga, Tennessee.
TVA [Tennessee Valley Authority]
1976  Chattanooga, Tenn. 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle 105-SE, edition of 1969, photorevised.

Unpublished Sources

"Chattanooga and Its Approaches, showing the Union and Rebel works before and during the Battles of 23rd, 24th and 25th November 1863 ... surveyed under direction of Brig. Gen. W. F. Smith." Map on file, Mapping Services Division, Tennessee Valley Authority, Chattanooga, Tennessee.


Plat of J. C. Stanton’s Subdivision, Chattanooga, Tenn. Exhibit “A” to report of Clerk and Master to April Term, 1873, Case No. 817. On file, Hamilton County Courthouse, Chattanooga, Tennessee.