

Archaeological Survey

**Archaeological Survey of the East 48th Avenue-Boniface Parkway
Extension**

Report

to

DOWL Engineers
4041 B Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

by

Douglas R. Reger, PhD
Reger Archaeological Consulting
4217 Dorothy Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99504

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Archaeological Survey of East 48th Avenue-Boniface Parkway Extension

The projected extension of East 48th Avenue from Bragaw Street to the Boniface Parkway, was examined for historic and prehistoric properties on August 3, 2006 and again on August 5. The project follows a slightly sinuous route that roughly parallels Tudor Road to the south (Figure 1). A variation of the main water line could pass just south of the Anchorage Police Department headquarters and join the main route east of the Albrecht ball field complex. An access route extends south from the intersection of Tudor Road and Tudor Centre Drive to connect with the main east/west route. The access road would pass west of the Chugach Electric Association (CEA) University substation. The area of potential effect (APE) for the project traverses areas of peaty bog, crossed by numerous winter trails and a graveled road. Southeast of the Tudor Road Anchorage Police Station it coincides with a bicycle path.

Two low ridges deposited under glacial ice during the last major glacial age are crossed by the project. The ridges, identified as drumlins, are oriented north to south and are part of a large drumlin field mapped in east Anchorage (Schmoll and Dobrovlny 1972; Reger and Updike 1983). Soils in the project area have been described in the soil survey of the Anchorage area (Moore 2001). Soils between the low ridges are cold peaty soils covered with low brush and scattered black spruce trees. Soils on the ridges are typical silty northern forest soils with thin organic upper horizons, eluviated or leached zones below and bright orangish zones fading into the underlying gravels. The intervening peaty soils were not well suited for aboriginal or historic occupations.

Methodology

The State of Alaska cultural site inventory, the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) was referenced and maps of the route area examined for known prehistoric or historic sites. The route was then walked, following survey stakes that mark the route from the east end of the project to the west end. The survey expanded out from the marked line in areas where site potential is high. A graveled road exits the parking area at the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT), Anchorage Maintenance Station at 5300 East Tudor road. That road leads to the Tudor Road Relay Facility (AHRS number ANC-01986). The project area behind the ADOT facility and the access road was heavily altered during earlier construction and small birch and spruce trees have re-grown over piles of disturbed debris and disturbed ground surface. West of the access road to the Relay Facility, the terrain slopes in elevation to the edge of a peat bog. That slope contains several rectangular pits that were mapped and designated ANC-2361 in the State inventory (see Findings section). A shovel test was excavated between the two features noted. South of the Chugach Electric Association (CEA) University Substation, the route crosses the second low ridge and intersects with a cleared area that contains snow fencing, apparently from dog sled races. A second shovel test was excavated in the flagged route, south and east of the clearing. It revealed a profile similar

to the test further east. West of the cleared area, the route descends a wooded slope to another peat bog expanse. It then crosses and parallels the paved bicycle path to Bragaw Street. An anomalous growth of birch and spruce trees in the middle of the eastern peat bog contains the base remnant of a creosoted pole. An earthen pad was constructed in the past for placement of the pole.

Previous Archaeological Surveys

Very few archaeological surveys have been completed in or near the project area. A survey aimed at identifying cultural sites along possible power line rights-of-way was completed during the 1980s (Greiser 1985). That survey paralleled the project area and reported a string of un-remarkable surface features along the south edge of Tudor Road. An archaeological survey of the intersecting Abbott Loop Road extension was conducted in 2004 (Reger 2004). That survey, which linked with this project at the Bragaw Street end, identified only a single creosoted radio pole nearby. Another cultural survey for road construction extending East Dowling Road to connect with the Abbott Loop project yielded negative results (Reger 2006).

Various efforts to examine reported sites in the Anchorage area have resulted in few documented aboriginal sites. Most finds proved to be isolated artifacts, generally out of geological or cultural context and located far from this project. Most historic properties have been identified downtown, along the distant Alaska Railroad, or north on the military bases.

Native History and Uses

The East 48th Avenue project is located in the aboriginal territory of the Athapaskan speaking Denaina Indians (Osgood 1966). The Denaina of the Anchorage area spoke the Upper Inlet dialect in common with the Denaina of Knik Arm and the Susitna Valley. Place names in the area were recorded by James Kari in interviews with Shem Pete, a Denaina elder and with other elders. The north fork of Campbell Creek was known as *Qin Cheghitn*, translated into English as “Crying Ridge Creek” (Kari and Fall 2003:339). No other place names were recorded that apply specifically to the project area. The lower reaches of Campbell Creek were settled by the Denaina and were important for fishing. The upper branches of the Creek were undoubtedly traversed by Denaina hunters traveling from the coast to the mountains to hunt.

The earlier human use of upper Cook Inlet, including the project area, is sketchily known. The prehistoric cultural history is best represented by one site located on Turnagain Arm, the Beluga Point Site (ANC-054). The upper Cook Inlet sequence is described by Reger (1998) and a summary is presented here.

The earliest occupation at the Beluga Point Site is represented by stone microblade cores and the microblades chipped from them. Similar tools, found elsewhere in Alaska, are 8,000 to 10,000 years old. The Beluga Point material, called the Beluga Point North 1 or BPN1 Component, is thought to be of that age.

At least four more archaeological components occur at the Beluga Point Site, each increasingly younger. The second oldest component at Beluga Point documents the first introduction to stone grinding as a technological development. Points formed by grinding slate to the desired form and chipped stone scrapers in the Beluga Point South 1 and 2 (BPS1 and BPS2) components are radiocarbon dated to about 4,000 years ago.

Another old component is the Beluga Point North 2 (BPN2) component is characterized by chipped stone points with narrow stems and distinctive, high shouldered stone knives. The point and knife forms suggest that component is probably 3,500 to 4,000 years old but are not radiocarbon dated. Because this component has no ground stone artifacts, it may be slightly older than the BPS 1 and BPS2 components.

The youngest prehistoric component at the Beluga Point Site is radiocarbon dated at 600 to 800 years old. That component contains a stemmed ground slate point with a blade that is diamond shaped in cross-section. It also contained a copper fragment that was chemically traced to deposits in the Copper River area.

Other sites occur along Turnagain Arm, but are widely scattered and contained few artifacts. Most finds were described in a report submitted to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities in 2001 but not yet released (Reger 2001). A site near McHugh Creek yielded a single long chipped stone point with parallel edges. Other sites in the area yielded small chipped stone points similar to points elsewhere dated to about 2,000 to 3,000 years old. Another nearby site contained a ground slate point related culturally to the BPS2 component at Beluga Point. A very similar point was reported found near Kincaid Park in the Anchorage area.

The only site clearly documented in the Anchorage bowl area is a series of house depressions and burial houses located near Point Woronzoff. That area may be the fishing locality reported by Denaina elder, Sava Stephan as *Q'is Kaq'ghe* (Kari and Fall 2003:338).

In summary, the Native culture history and prehistory in the Anchorage area potentially could be as old as 10,000 years old or as recent as World War II. No signs of historic use by Natives were found in the East Dowling or Abbott Loop Road project areas.

Non-Native History and Use

Information about historic use of the project area by Euro-American populations is also very limited. The Anchorage area was first visited in 1778 by the British explorer, Captain James Cook, but he did not land on shore or leave any signs of his visit. Later explorers include Captain George Vancouver and various Russian fur traders. A summary of the history of the Anchorage area is presented in Carberry (1979). As noted by Carberry, the first significant non-Native presence in the Anchorage area was when the Alaska Railroad was constructed and a construction camp was first established at the mouth of Ship Creek. That began in 1914 (Carberry 1979:5). Homesteading throughout the Anchorage area created use over much of the general landscape until restrictions were caused by military needs in the 1940s. A map in Carberry (1979:126) shows the wide range of homesteading but does not cover the area south of Tudor Road.

The first significant and traceable presence of non-Natives in the project area was during the military developments of World War II. The U.S. Army began construction at Fort Richardson in 1940 (Bush 1943:11). One of the goals of military construction in Anchorage was preparation of the air field which later became Elmendorf Air Force Base. A part of the strategy for basing military aircraft in Anchorage included preparation of auxiliary air fields in support of the main air facility. Part of the support air field system was construction of Campbell Creek Satellite Airfield in 1942 (Bush 1943:336). The Campbell Creek Satellite Airfield, known as the Campbell Airstrip, is just south the East

48th Avenue project. An aerial photo reported to be from 1950 of the Anchorage area that is reproduced on a calendar shows no large development in the project area at that time although several cleared trails appear to extend through the area (AeroMap 2000). A map published in the summary of military construction (Bush 1943) illustrates presence of a radio receiver facility northwest of the project area. A road is shown extending to just west of the Tudor Road and Bragaw Street intersection.

Survey Findings

The possible water main corridor that passes south of the Anchorage Police Department headquarters passes through a wooded area that has very irregular and hummocky terrain. No historic or prehistoric remains were seen in that area. No subsurface testing was done as the area is fairly wet and thought not suitable for subsurface remains. Several deposits of modern trash are located east of the headquarters area.

An possible access route that passes west of the CEA University Sub-station follows an existing dirt surface road for about half the distance from Tudor Road to the water main corridor. The remaining area is wooded and higher ground but no cultural remains were found there. Several mineral soil exposures in the route were examined and no remains were exposed. The route will pass west of ANC-536 (see below) but will not impact the site.

ANC-2361

Two rectangular depressions were found just west of the access road to the Tudor Road Relay Facility (ANC-1986) about 150 meters south of the parking lot of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public (ADOT) Anchorage Maintenance Station at 5300 East Tudor Road (Figure 2). The northern-most feature (Feature 2) is a rectangular pit, oriented north to south that measures 1.4 meters by 1.0 meter. The pit is relatively shallow, about 30 centimeters deep. It has sloping sides and there are no debris mounds around the perimeter of the feature. The pit is located about 25 meters west of the edge of the nearby access road. It is 14.5 meters south of the cleared and staked line marking the apparent centerline of the proposed project. The location recorded on a hand held GPS unit is N. 61° 10.723'; W. 149° 47.044'. The geo-technical test bore hole TB20 is located 11 meters NNE of Feature 2.

Feature 1 at ANC-2361 is a rectangular pit with straight vertical walls. It is oriented east to west on a surface gently sloping to the west. The pit measures 1.6 meters by 1.0 meter and is 85 centimeters deep. The flat bottom is on gravel. A flat top berm extends about 75 centimeters out from the south, west and north edges. The uphill east wall has no berm. The outer edge of the berm is only lightly covered with moss with gravel exposed in some places. The hand held GPS location is N. 61° 10.711'; W. 149° 47.049'.

The shovel test dug between the two rectangular pits was excavated to a depth of about 30 centimeters below the surface. The test measured 25 centimeters by 25 centimeters and sod cover there is 10 centimeters thick. The 2 centimeter thick uppermost mineral layer is organic enriched very dark grayish brown silt. Below that is a 6 centimeter thick eluviated zone of yellowish brown ashy silt with some inclusions of apparently pure gray volcanic ash. Silty material continues down in a zone which is

strong brown in a 7 centimeter thick unit. The strong brown color continues into basal gravels at a depth of 25 centimeters below the surface. The gravels below, which fade to dark yellowish brown, contain sand and well rounded stones up to 9 centimeters in length. This soil profile approximates the natural soils mapped in the area and the shovel test was culturally sterile.

No cultural debris is present around the two depressions to indicate any specific function or age. The vegetative re-growth suggests they may date to a period consistent with military activities during WWII or the Cold War. If they are associated with military activities, they were most likely linked to the Alaska Army National Guard establishment that first occupied the nearby ADOT Anchorage Maintenance Station. Examination of the 1950 vintage airphoto of the area shows no facility existed in that location in 1950. That would suggest Cold War age or more recent but the association is not certain.

ANC-536

This site consists of 3 pits, 1.7 meters by 1.8 meters to 0.75 meter by 0.8 meter in size (Greiser 1986). The rectangular pits have straight walls, overgrown with moss. The loosely clustered group is located just south of the CEA University Substation however the location does not coincide with the location shown on the AHRM maps at the State Office of History and Archaeology. Based on extrapolations in the All Topo map program, the site is located at N. 61° 10' 46.4"; W. 149° 47' 31.7". The site was rejected as eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places after Municipality of Anchorage and SHPO consultation on October 11, 1996. Construction of the access road west of the CEA University Sub-station will not impact the non-Register eligible property as the possible access route passes 37.5 meters west of the nearest feature.

The other cultural remains found during the archaeological survey was the base of a creosote impregnated pole located east of the Anchorage Police Department facility and in the middle of a peat bog. The pole remnant is in a small grove of birch and spruce trees surrounded by peat bog. Construction of the northern route variant appears to impact the pole base. An apparent access route from the north can be seen by the scattered grass growing on the disturbed route. The round pole base measures 50 centimeters in diameter and is 1.15 meters tall. The top was sawn flat. No other debris exists around the pole. The location of the pole recorded with a hand held GPS is N. 61° 10.706'; W. 149° 47.834'. The single pole probably dates to the military era but was not deemed important enough to assign a State site number.

Other Sites

Several other historic sites have been recorded in the vicinity of the area of potential effect for the East 48th Avenue extension, but are well outside project limits. They mostly are associated with military activities of World War II or the later Cold War. All are scattered remains or have been determined not eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Tudor Road Relay Facility (ANC-1986)

This complex of buildings was associated with the Alaska Army National Guard facility that is now the ADOT Anchorage Maintenance Station. The group of buildings is located at the end of an access road 0.5 kilometers south of Tudor Road. The property was determined not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places on July 9, 2001 (AHRS). The complex will not be effected by this project.

ANC-537

This site consists of a large series of scattered pits located along a low terrace edge south of Tudor Road. They stretch east from the intersection of Tudor Road and Bragaw Street. The pits generally are rectangular and average about 2.0 meters by 0.8 meter. The investigators suggested the pits were probably associated with past military activities and probably represent fox holes or similar features (Greiser 1986). These pits have not been considered for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and will not be effected by the East 48th Avenue extension project. They are well north of the project APE.

ANC-538

Although this site is far east and south of the East 48th Avenue project, it is mentioned here because the remains are similar to those found during the survey and to other sites nearby. ANC-538 consists of a series of small rectangular pits along the edge of a terrace beside Campbell Airstrip Road (Greiser 1986). Campbell Airstrip Road was the original access to the World War II auxiliary airfield. The investigators found 29 vertical sided pits and structural remains thought to be from a tent. The features were overgrown with spruce trees, 10-20 centimeters in diameter. Size of the trees and appearance of the pits suggested the pits are from the WWII or Cold War eras. This property has not been considered for eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and will not be effected by the project.

Other locations along the North Fork of Campbell Creek contain more of the small rectangular pits. Some pits have rifle cartridge brass scattered nearby. Most have not been reported to the AHRS however.

Discussion

The only cultural remains found in the APE for the East 48th Avenue extension project are the two pits at ANC-2361. While construction plans are not yet available, the pits appear likely to be destroyed. The Section 106 process requires the site to be considered for eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Age and function of the two pits at ANC-2631 cannot be determined from the evidence on the site or from reasonable archival research. However, the pits probably are fox hole type features or perhaps latrine pits. Military records typically do not have information about the location of such features and cannot be expected in this instance. The pits do not meet any of the criteria for determining eligibility

Another study of military remains done in the Anchorage area concluded that scattered features such as those at ANC-2361 were not eligible because they do not retain integrity and sufficient association with National Register criteria (Shaw, 2000:121).

Foxhole sites ANC-1177 and ANC-1183, both on Fort Richardson Army Base and both clearly fox hole features were determined not eligible by consensus of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the lead federal agency on February 16, 2001. The same rationale would appear to apply to ANC-2361. The site will be destroyed by the East 48th Avenue extension project but is not afforded protection under the National Historic Preservation Act if the site is determined to be not eligible.

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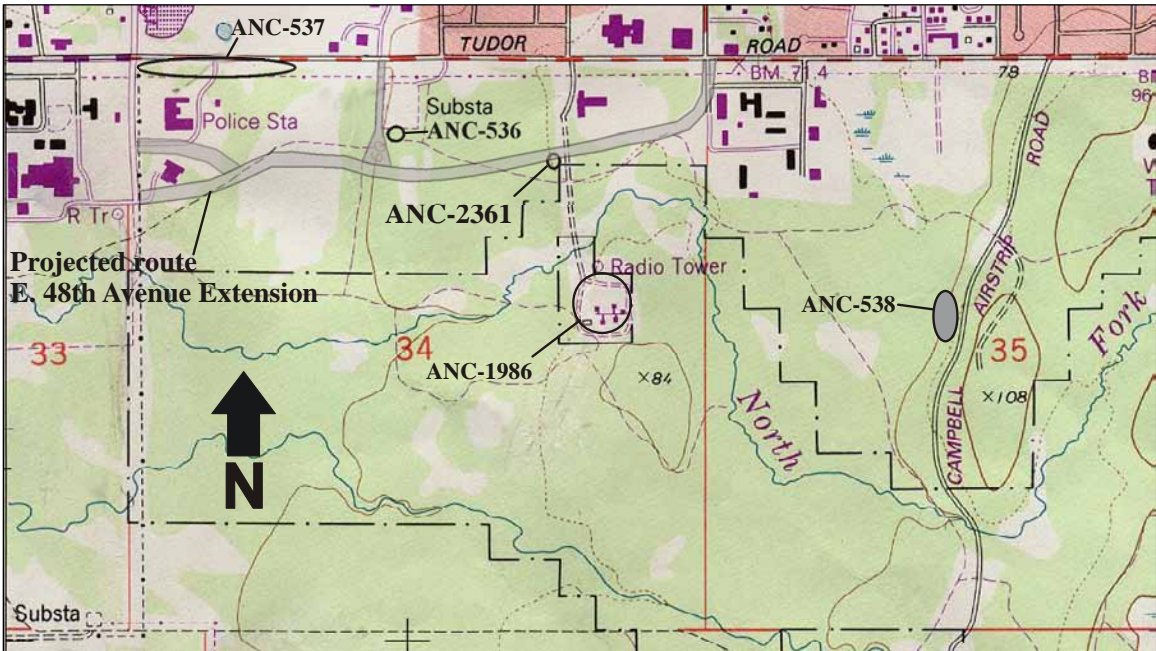


Figure 1. Project area map showing project alignment and area sites. Corridor alignments shown in gray. Map based on the U.S.G.S. Anchorage A8 NE.

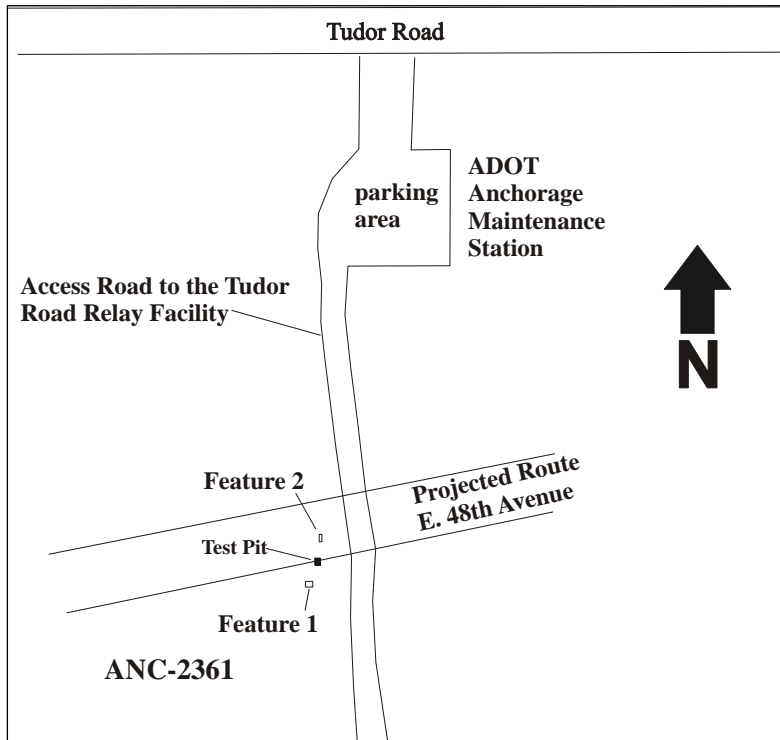


Figure 2. Site map for ANC-2361. Not to scale.



Figure 4. Feature 1 at ANC-2361. Outer edge of the flat top berm is marked by the heavy dashed line. The pit edge is marked by the dotted line. View is to the north.



Figure 3. Base of creosoted pole in peat bog east of the Anchorage Police Headquarters south of Tudor Road.