

## **SAN DIEGO PRESIDIO COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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*On May 17, 1769, the Presidio Real de San Diego was established, the first permanent European settlement on the Pacific Coast of the United States, and Fray Junípero Serra founded Mission San Diego de Alcalá. The site of the Presidio is owned by the City of San Diego. The purpose of the Collections Management Plan is to provide for the inventory, cataloging, and preservation of the artifacts excavated from the Presidio site over the last 90 years, so that the collections can allow for retrieval of specific artifacts or artifact classes and can be available to the public for education and research.*

This is an exciting time for us as we begin implementation of a collections management plan for the Presidio collections in the City's possession. I am going to start by giving a brief background on the San Diego Presidio and the excavations that have taken place over the past 90 years. Then I will summarize the four artifact collections under the City's control. The remainder of my paper will describe the management plan for these collections that has been approved by the City.

Founded on May 17, 1769, the Presidio Real de San Diego was the first permanent European settlement on the Pacific Coast of the present-day United States. On July 16th, Fray Junípero Serra founded Mission San Diego de Alcalá, the first of the California missions. The San Diego Presidio served as the base for exploring expeditions into the interior and as the military headquarters for southern California until its abandonment in 1837 (Luksic and Kendzioriski 1999). The site of the San Diego Presidio is located in Presidio Park, which is owned by the City and administered through the Park and Recreation Department. The Presidio site was designated a National Historic Landmark on October 9, 1960 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP No. 66000226) on October 15, 1966. The Presidio site is California State Historic Landmark No. 59 and City of San Diego Historical Site No. 4.

### **PRESIDIO EXCAVATIONS**

Since 1920, over 90 years of excavations have taken place in the Presidio. From 1920 to 1940, Percy Broell defined the boundary of the outer walls of the Presidio under the sponsorship of George W. Marston. Dr. Paul Ezell excavated the chapel in the south wing from 1965 to 1976, under the sponsorship of the San Diego Historical Society and San Diego State University. From 1976 to 1987, Dr. Diane Barbolla excavated the gateway in the west wing under the sponsorship of the San Diego Historical Society and Mesa Community College. Dr. Brad Bartel excavated in the north wing from 1987 to 1991, under the sponsorship of the San Diego Historical Society and San Diego State University. From 1992 to 1998, Dr. Jack Williams excavated in the north and east wings under the sponsorship of the San Diego Historical Society and the Center for Spanish Colonial Archaeology. The various collections are referred to by the names of their Principal Investigator.

Ezell determined the correct position of the chapel in the south wing of the Presidio, as well as excavating a related habitation area and a portion of the cemetery. The Ezell Collection is currently housed at San Diego State University. The remaining four Presidio collections are stored in the basement of the Developed Regional Parks Administration Building in Balboa Park, which does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards for curation.

In total, more than 250,000 artifacts have been excavated from the Presidio by these four excavation projects. Material classes include Native American ceramics and lithics; historic ceramics, including American, English, Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish Colonial wares; beads; buttons; textiles; jewelry; religious articles; miscellaneous metal items; glass; plaster; wood; and burial materials, such as

crosses, coffin nails, and wood. A rich assemblage of faunal material, primarily shell and animal bone, is also included in the collections. Copper earrings, shell buttons and beads, and a bone crochet hook in pristine condition indicate a strong female presence. Chinese ceramics from the Ming Dynasty period were excavated during the Barbolla Gateway project. In addition, there are numerous religious medals, crosses, and crucifixes in the collections.

After transfer to the City, the Barbolla Collection was repackaged to stabilize the collection. During stabilization, portions of the fish bone and bird bone were removed for analysis. The fish bone was analyzed by Mark Roeder (2010), and the bird bone, by Aaron Sasson and Susan Arter of the San Diego Zooarchaeology Lab at the Natural History Museum. In addition, portions of the Barbolla, Bartel, and Williams collections were consolidated. None of the collections are organized or documented in their present location to allow for retrieval of specific artifacts or artifact classes; thus, the collections are unavailable for education or research.

### **Broell Collection (1920-1940)**

Percy Broell conducted test excavations at the Presidio at a time when American archaeology lacked scientific rigor. He was not trained in excavation techniques, but was able to determine that the site was well-preserved, and mapped the general layout of the obvious mounds. The artifacts from his random digging have been placed in boxes of various sizes and shapes and lack exact provenience information. Artifact location information is general, such as “north wing” or “south mound.” Lists of the artifacts were compiled by Broell. These artifacts will need the most work to bring them up to current professional standards and to make them archivally sound.

### **Barbolla Collection (1976-1987)**

Dr. Diane Barbolla explored a large area of the west wing in search of the main entrance to the Presidio. Five rooms were uncovered, including a large structure known as the *almacén* (warehouse), as well as a large section of the original outer defense wall. In addition, a massive trash dump was identified west of the Presidio. Ceramics from the Barbolla Collection consist of Chinese, French, English, Mexican/Spanish, and Native American wares. She published a report on the majolica ceramics recovered in *The Journal of San Diego History* in 2009. Her excavations also produced children’s toys (a toy cannon with two balls) and game pieces; worked shell beads; personal items such as jewelry, metal and shell buttons, and belt buckles; building hardware, such as drawer pulls, lock sets, and hinges; glass pieces; and many Native American stone tools. The artifacts demonstrate the variety of activities performed by two vastly different cultural groups at the Presidio (Barbolla 1992). The total number of artifacts, which does not include shells or animal bones, is over 15,000 items. All of the artifacts were cataloged by Barbolla, and the information was stored on floppy computer disks. When transferred to the City, the collection was stored in 100 bankers boxes, including seven boxes of field notes, catalogs, and reports.

### **Bartel Collection (1987-1991)**

Dr. Brad Bartel conducted the first methodical excavation of the north wing of the Presidio, determined the well-preserved character of the northeastern corner, and produced evidence of a complex set of related architectural features. He published a final report of his excavations in *The Journal of San Diego History* in 1991. Based on excavation of nine units over several years, over 30,000 artifacts were recovered, which does not include “thousands of bone and shell” artifacts (Bartel 1991). Ceramics constituted 89 percent, glass 6 percent, metal objects 3 percent, stone objects 1 percent, and modern items 1 percent of the total. The overwhelming majority of ceramics (86.1 percent) were Native American, followed by English ceramics (5.1 percent), majolica (4.1 percent) and Chinese ceramics (2.4 percent). Metal artifacts included buttons, munitions and gun parts, needles, hardware, and personal items, such as earrings and finger rings. Evidence of Native American activities included flaked stone tools, stone beads,

stone bowls, and grinding equipment. One unit was used as a sample for examination of the animal bone. Over 4,000 pieces of bone were recovered, including cattle (25 percent), fish (26 percent), bird (12 percent), sheep (5 percent), rabbit (5 percent), deer (3 percent), and rodents (24 percent). Pig bones were conspicuously absent.

While the Bartel artifacts appear to fall into the same material classes as those from the Broell, Barbolla, and Williams excavations, unlike the other collections, Native American items dominate. This is important in the overall interpretation of the site, and significant to the many Native American descendants still living in San Diego County.

### **Williams Collection (1992-1998)**

Dr. Jack Williams identified areas of archaeological sensitivity for the City of San Diego and discovered evidence of the evolution of the settlement through time at various locations in the north and east wings of the quadrangle. Various domestic areas and fortifications were excavated, including a bastion at the northeastern corner and the Casa de Zúñiga complex that housed the commandant of the Presidio. The excavations were reburied in 1999. Architectural reconstruction and historical documentation were the foci of the Williams excavations (Williams 1997a, 1997b). Consequently, details about recovered artifacts have not been reported. However, all artifacts were cataloged, and provenience information in the form of maps provides important documentation of these excavations. Artifacts from the Williams excavation consist of household items, including a large number of Chinese, French, English, and Spanish/Mexican wares; glass; metal; seashells; animal bone; and a variety of munitions. The amount of area excavated by Williams far exceeds that excavated by Barbolla or Bartel. The total number of boxes of artifacts from the Williams excavation alone was close to 300, containing about 200,000 artifacts.

## **COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The San Diego Presidio Collections Management Plan was prepared by the San Diego Presidio Park Council. The purpose of the management plan is to provide a phased management plan for the inventory, cataloging, and preservation of the artifacts excavated from the Presidio site over the last 90 years, so that the collections can allow for retrieval of specific artifacts or artifact classes and be available to the public for education and research.

The City, through the San Diego Presidio Park Council and the Historical Resources Board, is working with the San Diego Archaeological Center (SDAC) to implement the management plan. The City and SDAC will maintain the Presidio collections in accordance with federal standards; culturally affiliated Native American and ethnic group advice; professional museum and archival practices; and any other relevant and appropriate recommendations as to the care of archaeological collections and archives, in order to prevent degradation of collections by human or environmental factors. Original field notes, catalog sheets, catalog cards, bag labels, and other materials will be preserved. In addition, for those collections which were excavated before the adoption of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), a NAGPRA inventory will be prepared and efforts to repatriate relevant objects will take place.

Implementation of the management plan will be in four phases. Each phase will be conducted under the direction of the San Diego Presidio Park Council and the Principal Investigator, in consultation with appropriate City staff from the Development Services Department, Park and Recreation Department and Historical Resources Board. Individual phases will not be started until funds are available to complete each phase.

The City approved the management plan in 2011. In October 2011, the City approved \$10,000 from its Historic Preservation Fund for the first phase. Phase I was begun in March 2012.

## STAFFING

Staff includes Seán Cárdenas, chair of the San Diego Presidio Park Council; Dr. Jerry Schaefer, Principal Investigator and chair of the San Diego Presidio Park Council Curation and Collections Subcommittee; Cindy Stankowski, Director of the SDAC; and Dr. Adolfo Muniz, Collections Manager of the SDAC. Collections technicians, trained student interns, and community volunteers will perform collections management procedures under the direct supervision of Muniz.

The SDAC trains and supervises collections processing technicians, student interns, graduate students, and interested members of the public to participate in the preservation of cultural resources. Implementation of the management plan will focus on volunteer labor. Volunteer labor has been used before during excavations and as part of the reburial process of the most recent excavations. However, the City has never had an active volunteer program at Presidio Park. Organization of volunteers to assist with the archival packaging will be an important part of this management plan. In addition, a student intern program will be aggressively pursued with local colleges and universities.

The four phases of the management plan are described below.

## PHASE I

### Inventory Verification

In Phase I, the general condition of the collections will be evaluated, including the condition of boxes, bags, bag labels, object labels, and box labels; the organization of collections by site number or locus; evidence of mold, insects, pests, and dirt; the presence of computer data, catalog, associated records, and previous NAGPRA inventory; and the total number of boxes of artifacts and associated records, unboxed artifacts, and an estimate of the total number of artifacts.

Inventory verification will include separation of the Barbolla, Bartel and Williams artifacts from the consolidated boxes and their return to their original collections, item-by-item verification of artifacts against existing catalogs and associated documents, identification of missing artifacts, and summary documentation of non-cataloged artifacts.

In addition, particular conservation needs will be identified and documented. Artifact boxes will receive temporary labeling for ease in completing subsequent phases. Existing catalogs will be converted to digital format, if possible.

The work was originally planned to take place in the basement of the Developed Regional Parks Administration Building, but it was subsequently decided to transfer portions of the existing collections to the SDAC in order to take full advantage of the staff's expertise, facilities, and hours of availability.

### Catalog Development

The catalogs from the individual Presidio excavations were completed by different people, under different methodological and theoretical practices. The result is four separate catalogs without sufficient detail to provide research-level access to the material. To assure this level of accessibility, artifact classifications will be updated to current professional standards to establish a unifying level of control. A working group of local experts experienced with the Presidio period, under the San Diego Presidio Park Council Curation and Collections Subcommittee, will examine the historic and ethnohistoric components of the Presidio collections to improve the documentation of the catalog in accordance with current theory and knowledge.

A coded cataloguing system will be developed, using terms that can be easily learned and implemented on a computer, including object class, object name, and material.

Finally, a program will be implemented to train volunteers in the use of the code sheets and database program.

## **PHASE II**

### **Collections Cataloging**

In Phase II, the collections will be cataloged according to standardized and improved nomenclature. The catalog will be entered on a computer database. Collections will be organized according to location, material class, item type, and material type. Inventories of each box will be prepared for ease in locating individual artifacts. A unique number will be assigned to each box and unboxed artifact.

Artifacts in each material class will be quantified by estimated minimum number of items and/or weight. There will be no attempt to identify species of animal bone or shell. Bulk items such as concrete, building items, brick fragments, window glass, and tile are usually so fragmented that estimated minimum numbers cannot be calculated and in many cases would be inappropriate. These artifact types will be quantified by weight only. With this classification method, the artifact assemblages can be analyzed by functional activity groups, so that changes in activity patterns can be studied and a method is still provided for conducting analysis of smaller artifacts such as, for example, European ceramics, bottle glass, military items, faunal material, or clothing items.

Volunteers will be trained in accurate artifact identification with the development of “pottery boards,” on which physical samples of artifact types are displayed and identified, and with manuals in which different artifact types, identification marks, and other identifying attributes are illustrated. Periodic review during the cataloging process will ensure that identification is accurate. Additional information and training will be provided as needed, along with personal expert identification of unusual or hard-to-identify items.

### **NAGPRA Inventory**

During Phase II, collections will be assessed for items which may be subject to NAGPRA, including human remains, associated and unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony. A summary will be prepared of unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony for distribution by the City. An inventory will also be prepared of human remains and associated funerary objects for distribution by the City. Native American consultations will be facilitated.

### **Archival Packaging**

Phase II will be completed with archival packaging. Boxes, bags, bag labels, and object labels will be replaced with archival-quality materials. Associated documents will be copied onto acid-free paper and placed in archival-quality boxes. Large documents, photographs, maps, and other large-format associated documents will be placed in appropriate archival-quality containers. Boxes and objects will be labeled for curation.

## **PHASE III**

### **Curation**

In Phase III, the City may rehabilitate the basement of the Developed Regional Parks Administration Building to meet the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for curation or arrange for permanent curation of the collections at the SDAC. The City may also consider requests for use of the collections; provide assistance in use of the collections, including access, processing loans, retrieval, and replacement of artifacts; consider requests to transfer or repatriate any collections material remains or associated records; provide management in emergency situations; provide security for collections; and observe suggestions and advice concerning access, handling, storage, inspection, inventory, cleaning, conserving, labeling, and exhibition of archaeological artifacts in consultation with affiliated Native American and other descendant groups.

## PHASE IV

### Interpretive Plan

In the final phase, a written interpretive plan will be prepared about the collections for a museum-based learning program at the Serra Museum and for offsite education.

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