

Chapter V

THE UTSA HEMISFAIR PARK CAMPUS

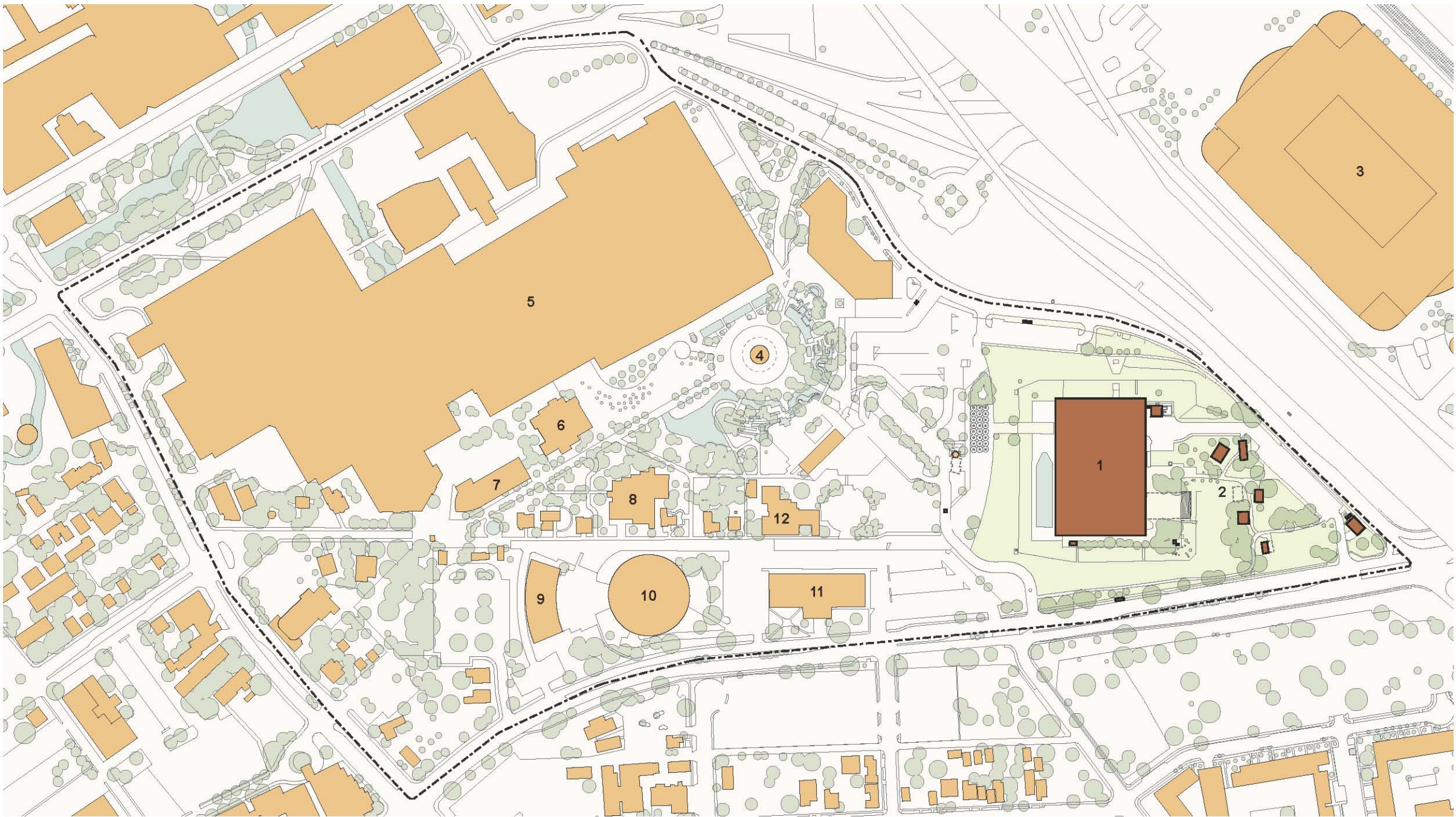
Housing the Institute of Texan Cultures, The UTSA HemisFair Park Campus is a unique cultural history museum in downtown San Antonio. The ITC contains an extensive historic photography collection as well as UTSA's archives and serves as a valuable resource for historical research on topics related to Texas history and Texas educators. Because of its proximity to the San Antonio Riverwalk, The HemisFair Park Campus is the most public of the UTSA campuses, and will play an important role in the University's relationship with the city.



FIGURE 1
The HemisFair Park Site Plan

- Institute of Texan Cultures* 1
- Back 40* 2
- Alamodome* 3
- Tower of the Americas* 4
- Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center* 5
- Universidad Nacional Autonoma de México* 6
- Instituto Cultural de México* 7
- Texas A&M University* 8
- Engineering Extension Service*
- Adrian A. Spears Judicial Training Center* 9
- John H. Wood, Jr. Federal Courthouse* 10
- Federal Office Building* 11
- Women's Pavilion* 12

- Existing UTSA Buildings* 
- Existing non-UTSA Buildings* 
- HemisFair Park* 





2

THE CAMPUS TODAY

Introduction

Originally conceived as a part of the 1968 World's Fair, the Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC) opened as the Texas Pavilion during the fair's run. After the fair ended, the Pavilion continued to run the exhibit and educational programs were added. Control of the Museum was transferred to The University of Texas at San Antonio by The University of Texas System Board of Regents in 1986.

The ITC performs an important function as an educational resource for teachers and school-age children. The 1968 World's Fair Exhibit still runs and is largely unchanged. In addition, the ITC contains 6,000 volumes, a historical photograph collection containing over 3,000,000 images, and UTSA's archives. The ITC averages more than 300,000 visitors annually, with school tours accounting for a significant number of those visitors.

Site and Context

The ITC occupies a portion of a 14.75-acre site adjacent to HemisFair Park in downtown San Antonio. In addition to the ITC building, the parklike "Back 40" incorporates outdoor exhibits of historical buildings and other artifacts. To the northwest is HemisFair Park, the Tower of the Americas, and the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center.

The HemisFair Park site in its current state generally lacks an overall coherence. In addition to the Convention Center and the Tower of the Americas, the Park contains among others the Women's Pavilion (also from the fair), the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de México, the Instituto de México, the John H. Wood, Jr. Federal Courthouse, and the Federal Office Building. The City of San Antonio is currently in the process of developing a long-term vision for the HemisFair Park property. The vision is intended to make stronger connections to the surrounding city and to make it a place to live, work, and dine.



3

Recommendations

The HemisFair Park Campus is underutilized with respect to its location in the city, and particularly in light of the vision that the City of San Antonio is developing for the adjacent HemisFair Park. The University will undertake a separate study that will consider the University's long-term options for the museum and the property.

Immediate physical improvement recommendations in this Master Plan are limited to wayfinding and identity. The wayfinding portion of this plan will examine existing identification systems and make recommendations that will facilitate a stronger identification of the ITC and HemisFair Park Campus with The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Wayfinding

The Institute for Texan Cultures has not as of yet been strongly identified with the University. While the HemisFair Park Campus has a clearly defined gateway, its site plan and circulation and parking patterns are unclear. The landscape design of the area at the building entrance should be addressed prior to developing long-term signage recommendations for the site and the building.

The campus has clear boundaries on its east and south sides, but the distinction from the rest of the HemisFair site should be clarified. The gateway sign for the HemisFair Park Campus should be moved to the edge of the campus on Durango Boulevard to increase the visibility of the entrance road. An additional gateway may be needed for pedestrian paths entering the campus from the west in the area of the Tower of the Americas.

Additional recommendations for wayfinding, including sample sign types, may be found in the Guidelines chapter of this Campus Master Plan.

FIGURE 2

The UTSA HemisFair Park Campus with the HemisFair Park backdrop

FIGURE 3

The UTSA HemisFair Park Campus, Aerial Perspective View