

Land at Sandacres Upnor Road, Upnor, near Rochester, Kent

Archaeological Evaluation Report





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Archaeological Evaluation Report

NGR: 575835, 171005

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (hereafter “the Client”) to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Sandacres, Upnor Road, Upnor near Rochester (hereafter ‘the Site’), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 575835 171005.

The fieldwork took place between the 21st and 22nd of January 2010.

Three archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated, using a JCB excavator with a toothless bucket, to record the presence or absence of archaeological remains. All excavation works were monitored under constant archaeological supervision.

Trenches 1 and 2 were located to the west of the Site on lower ground where previous sand extraction had taken place. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded in either trench. **Trench 3** was located on higher ground towards the centre of the Site in an area where the original level of the ground surface remained present. Within **Trench 3** a brick-laid path was recorded. It was aligned NNW/SSE and appears to lead towards the currently existing Sandacres bungalow. No dating evidence was retrieved from any features or deposits on the Site.

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Acknowledgments

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank CgMs Consulting, particularly Matthew Smith, for commissioning this archaeological evaluation and Ben Found, the County Archaeologist for Kent County Council, for his advice during the fieldwork. The assistance of Andrew McAuley of Taylor Wimpey is also appreciated with thanks.

The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Mark Williams. The fieldwork was directed by Sarah Mounce with the assistance of Catrin Matthews. The report was written by Sarah Mounce and the illustrations were prepared by Ken Lymer.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (hereafter 'The Client') to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Sandacres, Upnor Road, Upnor, near Rochester (hereafter 'the Site'), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 575835 171005 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The works were carried out in advance of proposed residential development. An application for planning permission (MC2007/1904) has been submitted to Kent County Council for the demolition of existing dwellings and construction of 35 dwellings with garages and associated parking.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the *Land at Sandacres, Upnor Road, Upnor, near Rochester, Kent. Written Scheme of Investigation: for an Archaeological Evaluation* (WSI) (Wessex Archaeology 2009), which was prepared in advance of the fieldwork. The WSI specified the strategy, techniques and methods to be employed by Wessex Archaeology's archaeologists during the evaluation. It was submitted for approval to KCC and CgMs Consulting prior to commencement of fieldwork.
- 1.1.4 The fieldwork was conducted between the 21st and 22nd of January 2010.

1.2 Site description

- 1.2.1 The Site comprises an irregularly shaped area of land approximately 1.5ha in size with a centrally located bungalow (**Figure 1**). The River Medway is located 50m to the southeast.
- 1.2.2 The Site is uneven with ground levels varying from 5m to 15m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The lower parts are the results of sand extraction on The Site. The Sandacres bungalow sits on an area of relatively higher ground in the centre of the Site which is thought to be the original natural ground level.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology on the Site is of Thanet Sand Formation (undifferentiated sand, silt and clay deposits) overlying Upper Chalk (Geological Survey of Great Britain 1954, Sheet 272).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (DBA) has been prepared by CgMs Consulting (Smith 2009) detailing the archaeological potential of the Site; the following is a summary of that.
- 2.1.2 Palaeolithic flintwork and a fossilised elephant remains have been found to the south-west of the Site and a fragment of Mammoth tusk was found to the north-west.
- 2.1.3 Prehistoric findspots are known from nearby sites. A Bronze Age sword (MKE 10058) is listed in the HER for Kent as having been discovered close to the former Upnor Ordnance Depot to the east.
- 2.1.4 The Ordnance Survey of 1909 shows that the western, northern, eastern and southern parts of the Site have undergone substantial sand extraction leaving a peninsular of the original ground surface at the centre of the Site.
- 2.1.5 The Ordnance Survey of 1961 records the current phase of building on the Site, with an access road leading from Upnor Road to the Sandacres bungalow.
- 2.1.6 The Site lies opposite the former Lower Upnor Ordnance Depot where recent archaeological evaluation work revealed remains associated with post-medieval brickworks.
- 2.1.7 Previous soil investigations have revealed varying levels of made-ground within the sand extracted areas and where areas of the possible original ground level may exist (Smith 2009).
- 2.1.8 The Desk-based Assessment identified the potential for archaeological works at the Site to encounter chance Palaeolithic finds within the Thanet Sands and post-Palaeolithic material in undisturbed areas.

3 AIMS

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation, as specified in the *WSI* (Wessex Archaeology 2009), were to determine or confirm the presence or absence and the general nature of any archaeological remains present.
- 3.1.2 To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual, sedimentological, environmental or other evidence where development is proposed.
- 3.1.3 The evaluation also aimed to:
- ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, date, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on the Site

- establish the extent to which previous development and/or other processes have affected archaeological deposits at the Site
- establish the likely impact on archaeological deposits of the proposed development

3.2 Specific

- 3.2.1 To determine if any surviving archaeological remains on the Site have the potential provide further information on the nature of settlement patterns in the area.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the *WSI* (Wessex Archaeology 2009) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (as amended 2008).

4.2 Fieldwork

- 4.2.1 A total of three evaluation trenches measuring 10m by 1.8m in plan were excavated under constant archaeological supervision.
- 4.2.2 The location of **Trench 3** was changed on site as it was not possible, due to health and safety constraints relating to an unstable and dangerous earth bank, to excavate it at its original location. The trench was moved 10m to the west; this was agreed in advance with CgMs Consulting.
- 4.2.3 The evaluation trenches were excavated using a JCB excavator with a toothless bucket to a depth suitable to reveal the presence or absence of archaeological deposits.
- 4.2.4 All trenches, including the relocation of **Trench 3**, were marked out on the ground using a Global Positioning Survey (GPS) prior to the commencement of work and were scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool to verify the absence of live underground services.
- 4.2.5 All evaluation trenches were machine excavated to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the top of the natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. Excavation normally ceased at the depth of 1.2m in accordance with Health and Safety guidelines. In the case of **Trench 2** and **3**, however, it was necessary to excavate a test pit. The test pit in **Trench 2** measured to a maximum depth of 1.5m and in **Trench 3** a maximum depth of 1.8m was recorded. These were undertaken in order to record the depth of the natural deposits.
- 4.2.6 All trenches, on agreement with CgMs Consulting and the County Archaeologist for Kent County Council, were backfilled on completion of the archaeological recording.

4.3 Recording

- 4.3.1 All recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system.
- 4.3.2 All archaeological features and deposits exposed in the evaluation trenches were hand cleaned and excavated to determine their nature, character and date.
- 4.3.3 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches comprises both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections). The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights.
- 4.3.4 Photographs were taken as appropriate, providing a record of excavated features and deposits, and images of the overall trench to illustrate their location and context. The record also includes images of the Site overall. The photographic record comprises black and white, colour images and digital photography.
- 4.3.5 All interventions were surveyed using a GPS tied into the Ordnance Survey.

4.4 Health and Safety

- 4.4.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety regulations 1992 and Health and Safety in Field Archaeology 1997, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.
- 4.4.2 A Health and Safety Risk Assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology 2010), which was read and understood by all staff attending the Site before groundwork commenced.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section presents the results of the archaeological evaluation. Detailed descriptions of the trenches are included in **Appendix 1**.

5.2 Stratigraphic Sequence

- 5.2.1 The general stratigraphic sequence recorded on the lower levels of the Site, in the area where **Trenches 1** and **2** were located, was modern topsoil overlying a layer of made-ground to an average depth of 1m onto the underlying natural sand (**Figures 2** and **3**).
- 5.2.2 The modern topsoil comprised a dark brown grey silty clay with abundant tree roots and twigs (**101** in **Trench 1** and **201** in **Trench 2**). It overlay a yellow brown to yellow orange silty sand layer of made-ground with varying quantities of modern red brick, lengths of wire, metal pipe, chalk and tree roots (**102** and **103** in **Trench 1**, and **202** in **Trench 2**). The natural deposits were recorded as hard light yellow sand (**104** in **Trench 1** and **203** in **Trench 2**).

- 5.2.3 **Trench 3** was positioned on higher ground just to the north of the existing Sandacres bungalow. Topsoil and subsoil overlay two natural sandy clay deposits (**Figure 4**). Towards the centre of the trench was a layer of made-ground which lay directly below the subsoil.
- 5.2.4 The topsoil comprised dark brown silty clay with frequent tree roots and moderate small rounded stones (**301**). It overlay dark greyish brown silty clay subsoil with occasional chalk fragments and tree roots (**302**). The underlying natural layer was characterised by a mid orange brown silty sandy clay with occasional chalk fragments and tree roots (**303**). This layer was sterile and appeared very similar to (**304**). This overlay the natural deposit of mottled yellow and light grey sandy clay with moderate iron panning (**304**) present at a depth of 1.36m.
- 5.2.5 Towards the centre of **Trench 3** a NNW/SSE aligned deposit of red bricks was recorded at a depth of 0.7m below the ground surface (**Figure 4**). The deposit (**305**) protruded <1m from the south-west facing section of the trench, and measured 0.8m wide. The red bricks measured 0.25m long by 0.12m wide and 0.06m thick. The deposit was one brick thick and laid in regular courses with no bonding/bedding agent. It is likely that this deposit formed part of a brick-laid path which extended across and beyond the trench, as is evident in the north-east facing section of the trench, possibly leading to the central bungalow.
- 5.2.6 The possible path (**305**) appeared to lie within a hollow which had subsequently been filled in with a layer of made-ground consisting of dark orange brown silty clay with common red brick and sub-angular stones (**306**). This layer was recorded at 0.3m down to 0.7m below the ground surface and measured 2.8m wide; it overlay (**303**).

6 FINDS

- 6.1.1 No artefactual evidence was recovered during the evaluation from the trenches or excavated spoil. All modern building material fragments were noted but not retained.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL

- 7.1.1 No features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the evaluation.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were identified within **Trenches 1** and **2**. Previous quarrying on the Site has resulted in high levels of disturbance in this area, as was evident from the depth of made-ground recorded in these two evaluation trenches.

- 8.1.2 **Trench 3** revealed a brick-laid path, aligned NNW/SSE which appears to lead to the central bungalow. This path was recorded at a depth of 0.7m below the surface which may suggest the original level of the ground surface. No dating evidence was recorded from the trench; however the red bricks appear to be modern in date.

8.2 Confidence Rating

- 8.2.1 Factors with the potential to have hindered recognition of archaeological remains during the evaluation include the disturbance caused by previous sand extraction and ground levelling. Despite these factors, this report supports a **moderate to high degree of confidence** that archaeological features or significant deposits within the trenches were recognised and recorded where present.

9 ARCHIVE

9.1 Preparation and Deposition

- 9.1.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990).
- 9.1.2 The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's Maidstone office under the site code 72860, but will ultimately be deposited for permanent storage with an appropriate museum.
- 9.1.3 The paper archive comprises an A4 ring-bound file containing:
- 3 Trench Record Sheets
 - 3 A4 Drawings, including 1 Graphics Register
 - 3 Photographic Records
 - Day Book
 - Survey Book
 - A copy of the WSI

10 REFERENCES

Geological Survey of Great Britain. 1954 *Geology of the country around Chatham: (one-inch geological sheet 272, new series)*. London: H.M.S.O.

Smith M. 2009 *Land at Sandacres, Lower Upnor, Kent. Desk Based Assessment*. CgMs unpublished report

Wessex Archaeology 2009 *Land at Sandacres, Upnor Road, Upnor, near Rochester, Kent. Written Scheme of Investigation: for an Archaeological Evaluation*. Ref T13128.01

Wessex Archaeology 2010 *Land at Sandacres, Upnor Road, near Rochester, Kent. Archaeological Evaluation Project Health and Safety Risk Assessment*. Ref 72860.01

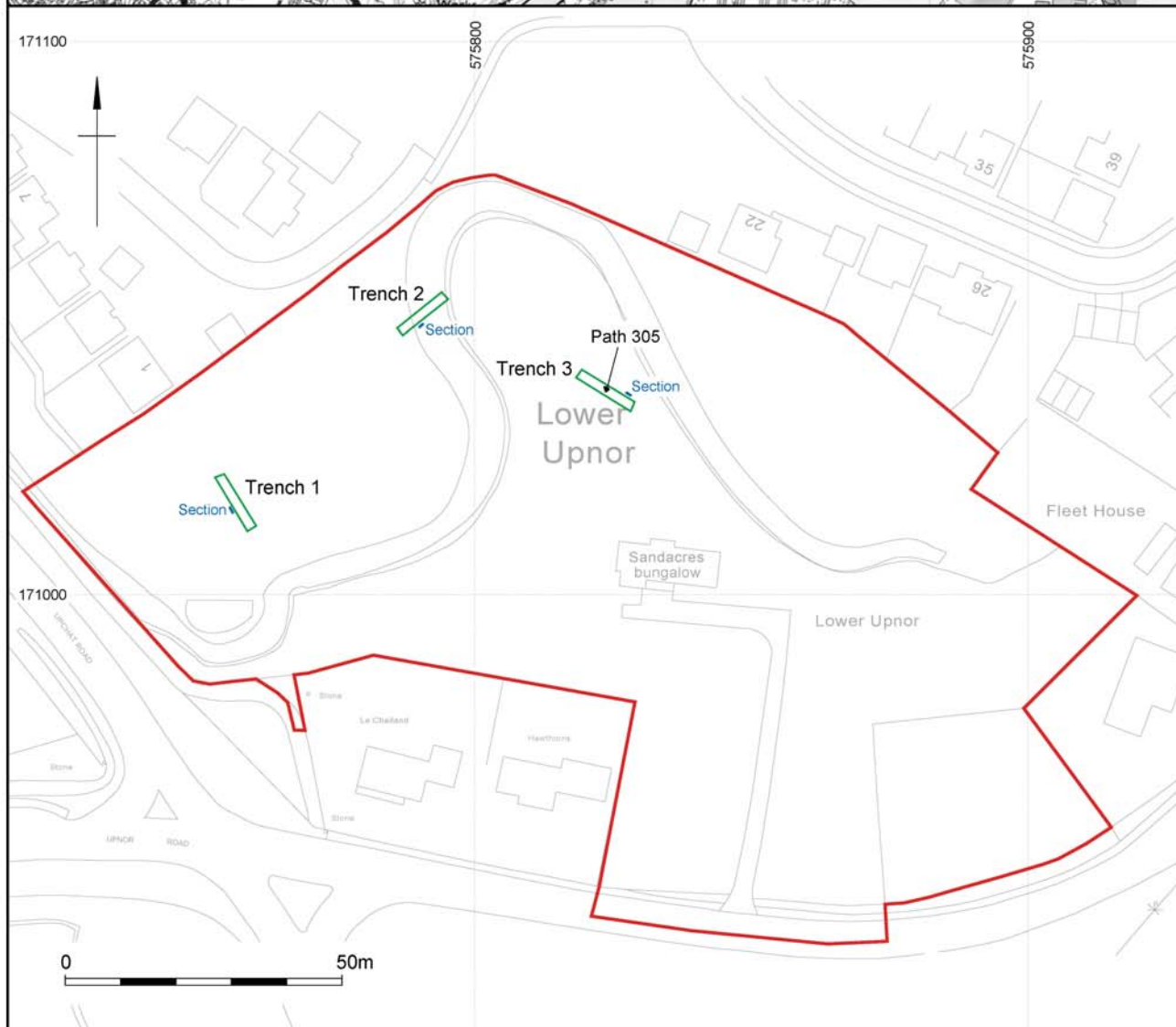
11 APPENDIX 1: TRENCH CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLES

Trench 1	Dimensions: 10m x 1.8m / Max. depth 1.20m		
	Coordinates: 575754.796, 171021.813, 8.538m aOD		
Context	Description	Interpretation/Process of deposition	Depth (m)
101	Dark brown grey silty clay with abundant tree roots and twigs, and common small chalk inclusion (>0.01m)	Modern topsoil	0.00-0.28
102	Yellow brown silty sand with abundant red brick, lengths of wire, metal pipe and plastic, and common chalk fragments (>0.02m)	Made-ground/backfilled quarry	0.28-0.78
103	Yellow brown silty clay sand with red brick fragments and common chalk fragments (>0.02m)	Made-ground/backfilled quarry	0.78-1.08
104	Hard light yellow sand	Natural	1.08 +

Trench 2	Dimensions: 10m x 1.8m / Max. depth 1.50m		
	Coordinates: 575795.235, 171053.4, 7.309m aOD		
Context	Description	Interpretation/Process of deposition	Depth (m)
201	Loose – moderately compacted dark brown grey silty clay with abundant tree roots and twigs	Modern topsoil	0.00-0.20
202	Loose – moderately compacted yellowish orange silty sand with common fragments of red brick and tree roots	Made-ground/backfilled quarry	0.20-1.00
203	Hard light yellow sand	Natural	1.00 +

Trench 3	Dimensions: 10m x 1.8m / Max. depth 1.80m		
	Coordinates: 575818.357, 171039.267, 11.296m aOD		
Context	Description	Interpretation/Process of deposition	Depth (m)
301	Dark brown silty clay with frequent tree roots and moderate small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.00-0.12
302	Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional chalk fragments and tree roots	Subsoil	0.12-0.30
303	Mid orange brown silty sandy clay with occasional chalk fragments and tree roots	Natural	0.30-1.36
304	Mottled yellow and light grey sandy clay with moderate iron panning	Natural	1.36 +
305	NNW/SSE aligned deposit of red bricks with no bonding agent (<1m x 0.8m) (Bricks: 0.25m x 0.12m x 0.06m)	Part of a brick lined path	0.70-0.76

306	Dark orange brown silty clay with common red brick and sub-angular stones (located at centre of trench; 2.8m wide)	Made-ground	0.30-0.70
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The Site

Evaluation trench

Modern feature

Wessex
Archaeology

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Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 1

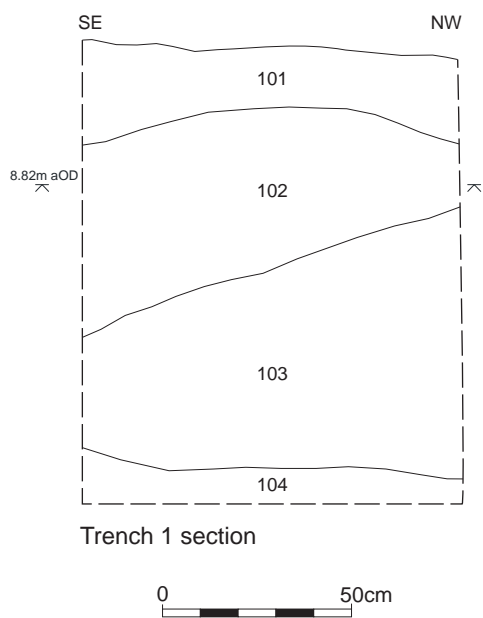


Plate 2: North-east facing section Trench 1



Plate 3: Trench 2

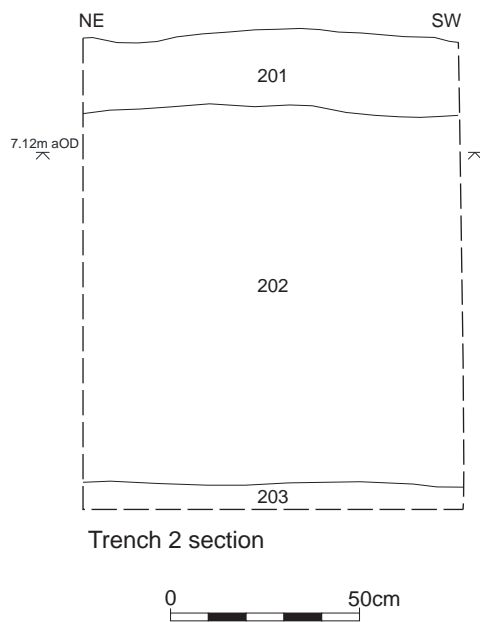


Plate 4: North-west facing section Trench 2



Plate 5: Trench 3 looking south-east



Plate 6: Path 305, view from south-west

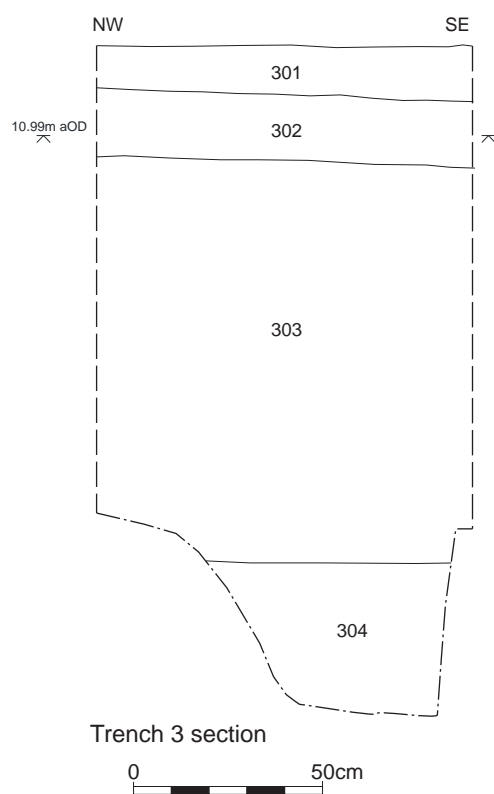


Plate 7: South-west facing section Trench 3



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