

Old Hill Site,
54 Burnham Lane,
Slough,
Berkshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

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**Old Hill Site, 54 Burnham Lane
Slough, Berkshire**

NGR SU 9432 8136

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SUMMARY

In November 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Old Hill Site, 54 Burnham Lane, Slough, Berkshire on behalf of Willmott Dixon Housing. The evaluation revealed a brick-built structure thought to be a late 19th or early 20th century capped well or soakaway. No deposits or structures of any archaeological potential or significance were identified during the evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In November 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Old Hill Site, 54 Burnham Lane, Slough, Berkshire (Fig. 1) on behalf of Willmott Dixon Housing, prior to the submission of a Planning Application for a residential development.
- 1.1.2 Babtie Group produced a brief and OA a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), which was agreed with Slough Borough Council's archaeological representative (Babtie Group).
- 1.1.3 The development site is situated adjacent to the junction of Burnham Lane and Buckingham Avenue.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The present site comprises a standing office building and associated car park, which slopes from north to south and lies at approximately 26 m OD. The underlying geology is clay, which overlies terrace deposits overlooking the River Thames roughly 3.5 km to the south.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The background was prepared for the WSI based on the brief and is briefly summarised below.
- 1.3.2 The site of the water mill in Cippenham was given together with the chapel there to Burnham Abbey in the medieval period, with the grant including the damn and the fishpond. The mill is referenced in disputes (for example those of 1535 and 1638) though there is no mention of the mill after the latter date.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Willmott Dixon Housing. OA extends its thanks to Slough Borough Council and its archaeological representative Kevin Beachus of Babtie Group.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to determine the location, extent, date character, significance, quality and state of preservation of any surviving archaeological remains likely to be threatened by the development. The degree of complexity of horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy was to be determined, as well as the range, quality and quantity of artefacts.
- 2.1.2 Attention would be given to sites and remains of all periods including evidence of past environments, with provision for environmental sampling included.
- 2.1.3 The evaluation would determine, if applicable, the relationship of above ground structures to surviving deposits below ground - should these relationships be identified then the evaluation would encompass the character, condition, significance and quality of the above ground remains.
- 2.1.4 The evaluation would seek to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion on the site and assess the degree of archaeological survival of all buried deposits and surviving structures of archaeological significance.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation comprised 3 trenches (Fig. 2), located to the north, south and east of the present building. The northernmost trench, Trench 1, measured 45 m in length and was 1.6 m in width. Trench 2 measured 30 m in length and 1.6 m in width. Originally Trench 3 would also have measured 30 m in length, however, a series of live services were identified across the area in front of the building. The actual length excavated measured 11 m in length by 1.6 m wide (see Fig. 2).

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.
- 3.2.2 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20.
- 3.2.3 All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures detailed in the OAU Fieldwork Manual (OAU, 1992).

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of deposits

4.1.1 Trenches 1 and 2 did not contain any archaeological features. The underlying natural was predominantly clay, with occasional patches of gravel. A small patch of chalk was identified at the east end of Trench 1. The natural was overlain by mixed clay deposits up to 0.5-0.6 m in depth. These were overlain by a rubble horizon, thought to relate to the demolition of a relatively modern building or buildings, which were sealed by the modern tarmac.

4.1.2 Trench 3 contained a brick-built structure (37) in the centre of the trench (Fig. 3). The feature was circular in plan, measuring *c* 2 m in diameter, and had a dome-shaped profile. The top of the feature had been removed and its full depth was not revealed during the excavation. The bricks measured 0.27 m in length, 0.12 m in width and were 0.08 m thick. The feature has been interpreted as a capped well or soak-away of late 19th to early 20th century date.

4.2 Finds

4.2.1 No finds were recovered during the evaluation.

4.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

4.3.1 As no deposits or features of any archaeological significance or interest were identified no environmental samples were taken.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Reliability of field investigation

5.1.1 The spatial sampling of the field investigation within the car park and entrance to the site gives a good indication of the archaeological potential. The area beneath the office block was not evaluated though the results of evaluation and the construction of the office block would suggest that there is an equally low potential for archaeological remains to have survived.

5.2 Overall interpretation

Summary of results

5.2.1 The northern area of the site appears to have been heavily truncated by the construction and demolition of a modern building. The southern area in front of the building appears to have been heavily disturbed by modern service trenches. The evaluation did though discover a modern brick-built well or soak-away in the southernmost area of the site. The level of truncation by the construction and demolition of a modern structure in Trenches 1 and 2 indicates a low archaeological potential in this area as with Trench 3 where multiple service trenches have impacted the ground. This may be similarly reflected beneath the existing office block.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
001								
	10	Layer	-	0.15	Tarmac	-	-	Modern
	11	Layer	-	0.25	Make-up for tarmac	-	-	Modern
	12	Layer	-	0.20	Construction/demolition layer	-	-	-
	13	Layer	-	0.60	Disturbed clay layer	-	-	-
	14	Layer	-	*	Clay natural	-	-	-
002								
	20	Layer	-	0.10	Tarmac	-	-	Modern
	21	Layer	-	0.25	Make-up for tarmac	-	-	Modern
	22	Layer	-	0.10	Construction/demolition layer	-	-	-
	23	Layer	-	0.50	Disturbed clay layer	-	-	-
	24	Layer	-	--	Clay natural	-	-	-
003								
	30	Layer	-	0.08	Tarmac	-	-	Modern
	31	Layer	-	0.18	Make-up for tarmacadam	-	-	Modern
	32	Layer	-	0.08	Ground make-up	-	-	-
	33	Layer	-	0.35	Disturbed ground make-up	-	-	-
	34	Layer	-	-	Disturbed silty-sand natural	-	-	-
	35	Cut	2.80	-	Cut for structure 37	-	-	Late C19th +
	36	Fill	-	-	Fill of construction cut 35	-	-	-
	37	Structure	1.90	-	Brick capped well/soakaway	-	-	-
	38	Cut	8.50	0.20	Service trench	-	-	-
	39	Fill	8.50	0.20	Fill of service trench	-	-	-

APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Old Hill Site, 54 Burnham Lane, Slough, Berkshire

Site code: SLBLOH 03

Grid reference: SU 9432 8136

Type of evaluation: 3 x trial trenches excavated by machine

Date and duration of project: 4th - 6th November 2003

Area of site: 3,360 m²

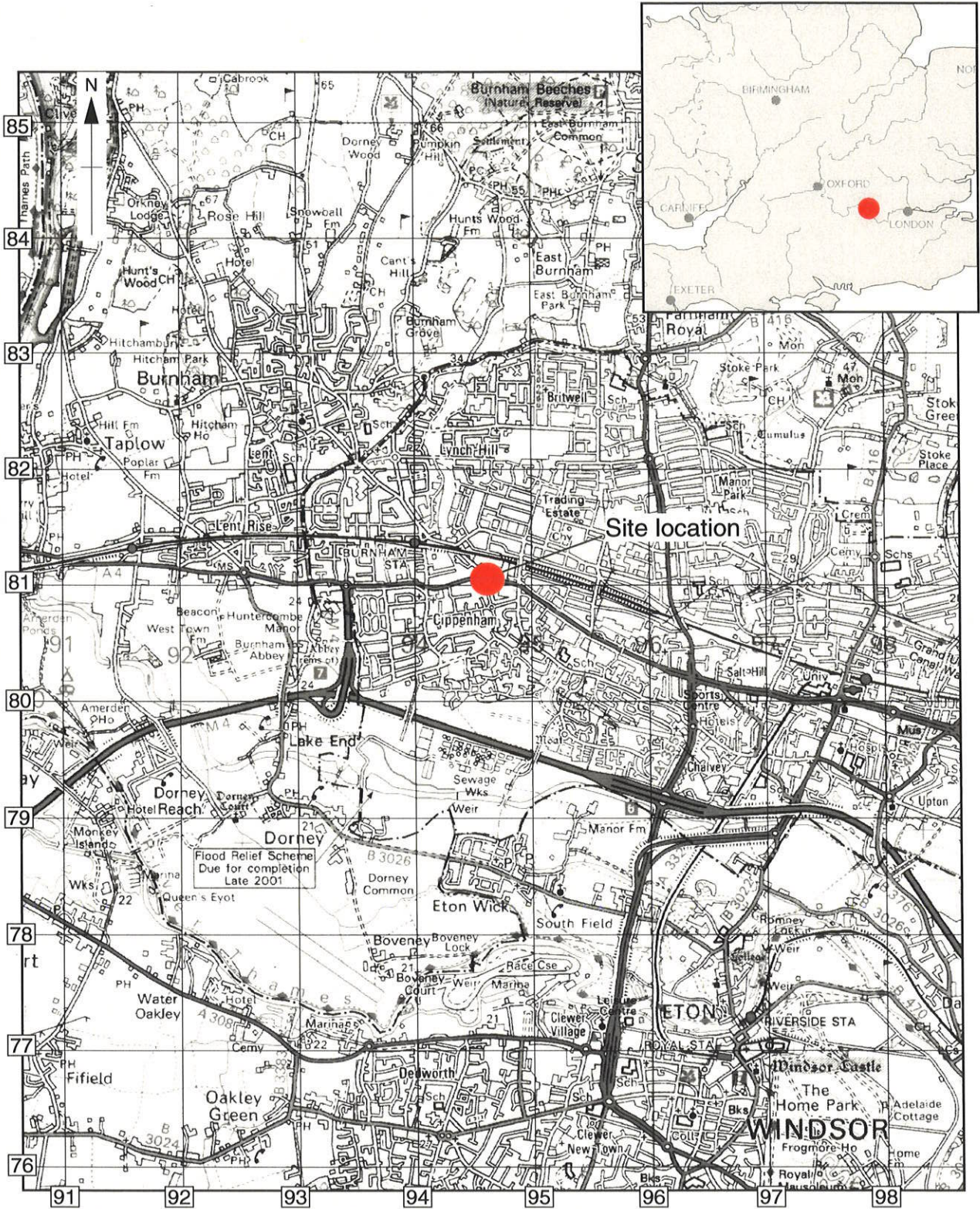
Summary of results: No deposits or structures of archaeological significance were identified. A late C19th well or soak-away was noted in Trench 3.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course, under the following accession number: REDMG: 2003.298

APPENDIX 3 REFERENCES

OA, 2003 *Old Hill Site, 54 Burnham Lane, Slough, Berkshire. Written Scheme of Investigation.*

OAU, 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (ed. D. Wilkinson)*



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location

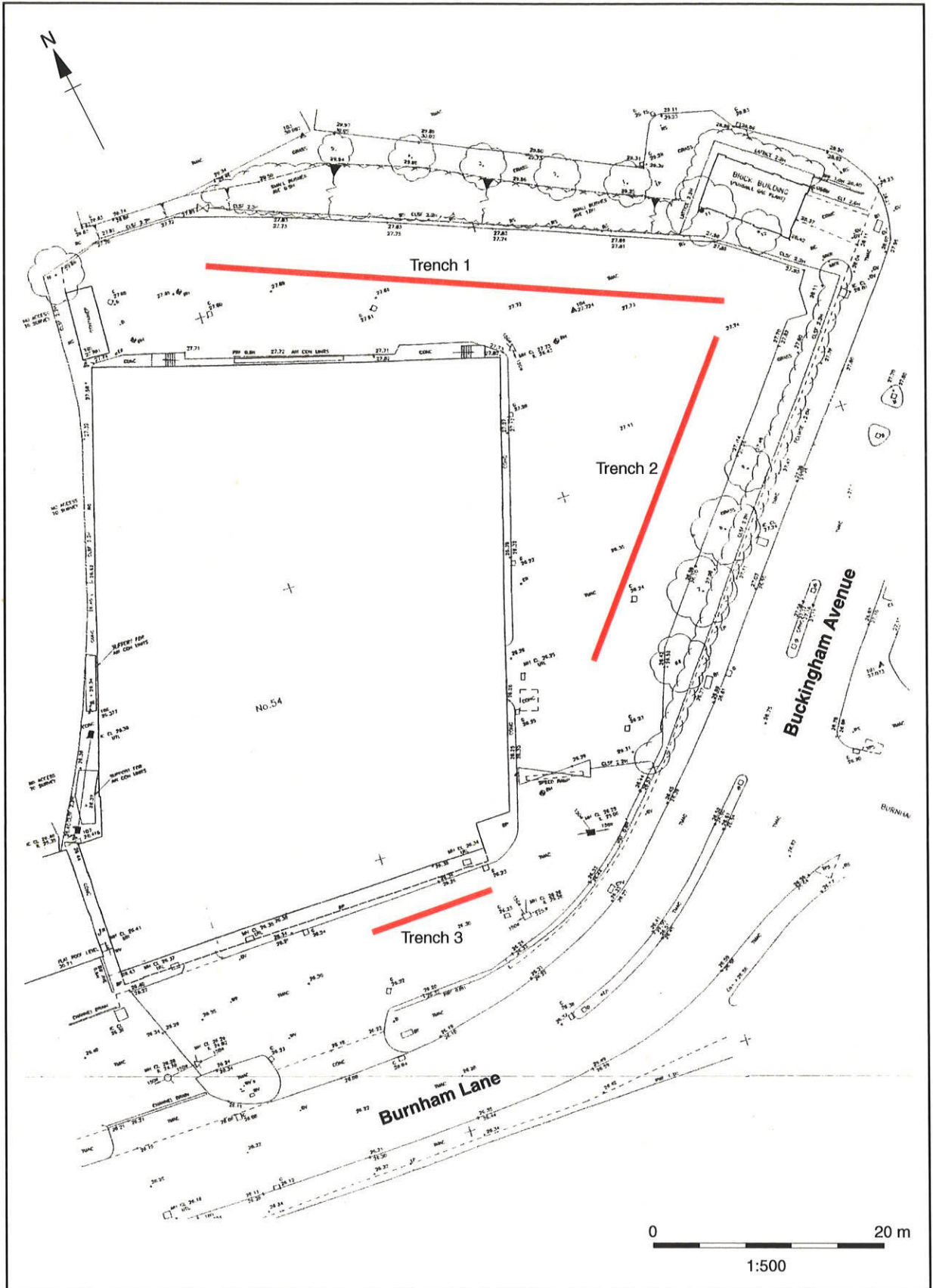


Figure 2: Trench location plan

Plan of feature 37 in Trench 3

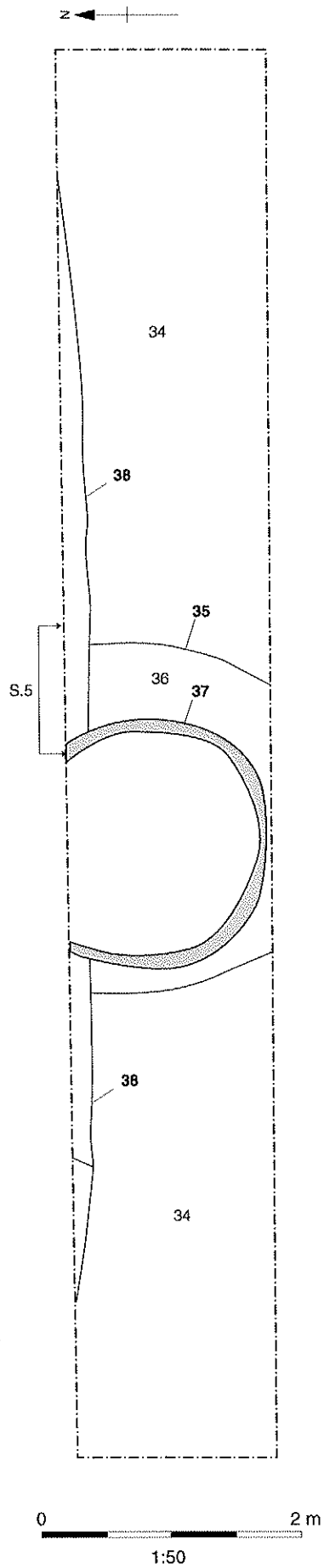
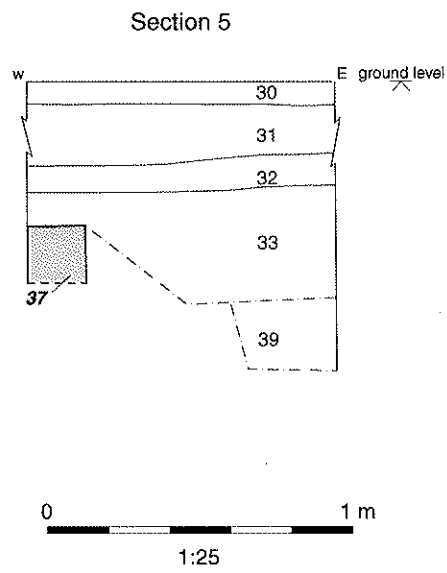


Figure 3: Trench 3, plan and section



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