

HCP 149 Royal Tennis Court Garden, Hampton Court Palace

An Archaeological Watching Brief



Accession Code: 3910034

NGR: TQ 15824 68543

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August 2016



Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in association with the installation of a new foul water drainage serving the 1st floor kitchen of the tennis court building. The works were located in the Royal Tennis Court adjacent to the western wall of the range connecting the Royal Tennis Court to the main palace complex. Nothing of Archaeological significance was uncovered.



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1 Location and Scope of work

- 1.1 This archaeological watching brief report has been prepared by the Curatorial department of Historic Royal Palaces to outline the archaeological mitigation works associated with the installation of a new foul water drainage branch replacing the temporary arrangements that served the 1st floor kitchen of the tennis court building. The works were located in the Royal Tennis Court Garden located to next to the western wall of the gallery linking the tennis court building with the main palace complex. The work was undertaken during the week of the 22nd August 2016.
- 1.2 The works were centred on National Grid Reference TQ 15824 68543.
- 1.3 The site code assigned to this project was HCP 149. An accession number, 3910034, was allocated and encompasses the physical, digital and paper archives associated with this project.

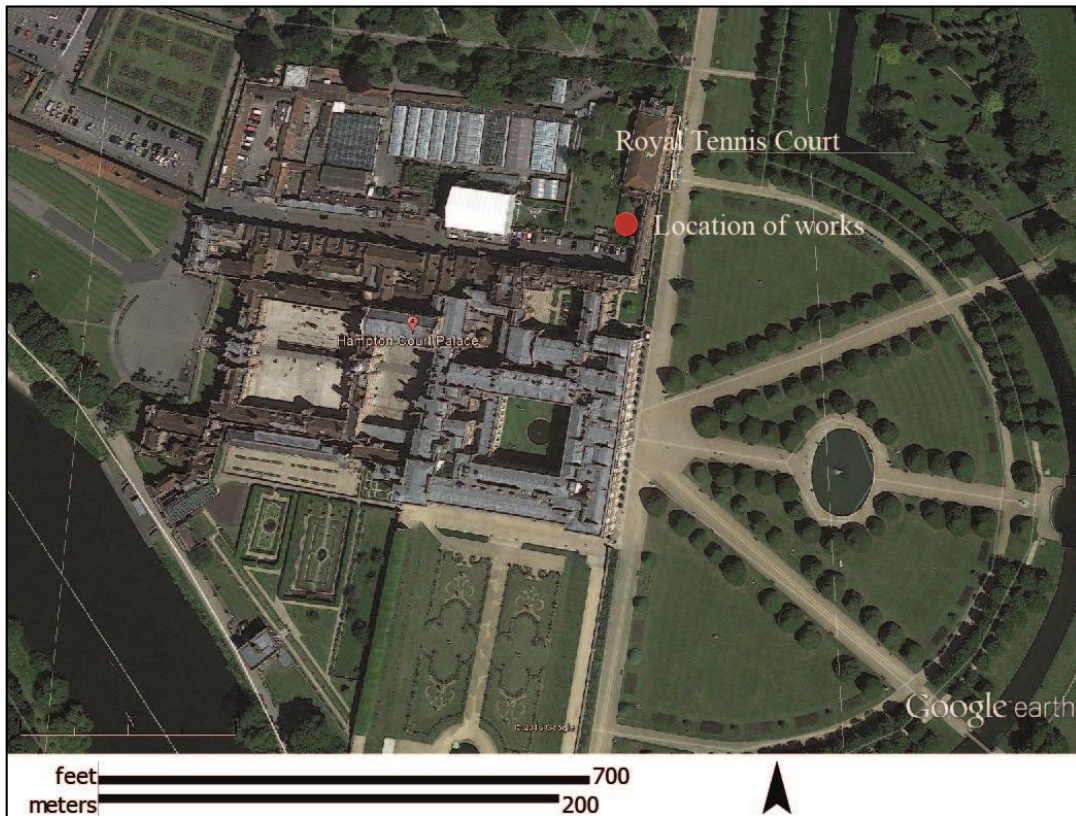


Figure 1: General location of site, Google Earth©

2 Aims and Methodology

Aims

- 2.1 The area had some potential for uncovering new archaeological material related to the construction of both the current tennis court building and earlier phases of this same structure. There was also potential to uncover the remains of earlier features and as this area had not been subject to any previous archaeological exploration.
- 2.2 It is thought that a tennis court has stood in this location since at least Cardinal Wolsey's occupation of the palace (1515-1528), but a building may have existed even prior to this period when Hampton Court belonged to Giles Daubeney from 1495 up until his death in 1508. Evidence of this may be left in the form of building foundations, deposits and un-stratified finds.



Methodology

- 2.3 The works carried out in the Royal Tennis Court Garden required an archaeological watching brief in order to record and protect any archaeological remains uncovered with the intention of mitigating the negative effects on any buried archaeological assets and the fabric of the Royal Tennis Court building.
- 2.4 An application for Scheduled Monument Clearance at Hampton Court Palace was granted from Historic England for the proposed scheme of works (*Scheduled Monument No: SM LO 83. Ref: HA 1002009*). Conservation is the overriding priority in all of HRP's aims and objectives; guided by strict in-house conservation principles. These include a commitment to the continued use and occupation of the palaces, but with minimum intervention to the historic fabric. Any interventions are preceded by informed research and study of the physical and documentary evidence, and meticulous recording of the fabric before, during and after all work.
- 2.5 During the course of the works, if any archaeologically significant horizons were suspected the archaeologist paused the excavation to allow for examination and recording. Any finds were collected and numbered according to the context of their discovery.
- 2.6 Any archaeological levels, features or structures were cleaned using appropriate hand tools and recorded in plan at 1:20 and/or in section at 1:10, as appropriate. Digital SLR photographs were also taken as part of the record. A written description was carried out using HRP Pro Forma context record sheets. A unique-number site code, HCP 149, was allocated to this project and has been used to identify finds and archival material resulting from the project. Any finds recovered were exposed, lifted, cleaned and conserved and will be housed by Historic Royal Palaces and accessioned into the permanent collection.
- 2.7 This project will not require any further analysis or publication. However the site report will be logged on the Oasis website and Historic Royal Palaces will submit a summary of the project for the annual round-up section of London Archaeologist.

3 Archaeological Background

- 3.1 Hampton Court Palace is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Surrey No. 83). The palace, gardens and grounds form an archaeological and historical site of national importance. The historical background to Hampton Court is well documented and will not be repeated here.

A Brief historical background of the site

- 3.2 The area to the north of the palace was taken up by what was known as the Privy Orchard from the early to mid-15th century according to recent archaeological investigations (Longstaffe-Gowan 2005, p.146) and by the late 1520's the garden was enclosed with walls, with an open tennis court and gallery built creating a link with the main palace building. In 1537 a covered bowling alley was built across the Privy Orchard from north to south at the eastern end of the garden. It stretched out from Prince Edward's lodgings out to the northern boundary wall of the orchard creating a permanent division in the garden.
- 3.3 By the mid-17th century the area to the west became known as the Kitchen Garden and the bowling alley was possibly converted into forcing houses whilst the area to the east of this long slender building was laid out as a garden, which would become known as Tennis Court Garden. This garden still exists today lying between the west wall of the Tennis Court and the brick Victorian Garden walls at the eastern end of the Glass House Nursery.
- 3.4 The Kitchen Garden later became known as the Melon Ground in the third quarter of the 17th century, whilst the Tennis Court Garden was also delineated and sub-divided into two sections around the same time.



3.5 In the late 18th century the remains of the old moat along the eastern and northern end of the palace grounds were filled in, and the northern branch planted with trees and shrubs. The once open Nursery ground was becoming increasingly cluttered with glass houses, whilst the western end of this space was given over to a works yard. At the same time the Tennis Court Garden was transformed into an Orchard (Longstaffe-Gowan, p.150).

Hampton Court Tennis Courts

3.6 It is unclear when and where the first tennis court at Hampton court was constructed although it is likely that it inhabited the same spot as the present day court building. It is also uncertain who constructed this first building, although we know that Henry VII brought about a revival of the game in 1494 having several courts built at Kenilworth, Richmond, Windsor and Woodstock. It is thus a possibility that a court existed as far back as Daubney's occupation of the palace during the early 1500's (Thurley, 2003, p.53). According to Thurley, it seems more likely to have been built by Daubney than Wolsey, since the latter was probably less interested in sporting activities. Daphne Ford's phased plans of the palace show the conjectural location of an open tennis court structure at the far eastern end of the Privy orchard, on the north side of the palace.

3.7 In 1531-33 work began on the construction of a vast chapel-like buttressed and fenestrated building that would serve as the new Hampton Court Play (court) built on the east front of the palace at right angles to the chapel. This meant the palace now had two tennis courts, a new indoor tennis court and the old outdoor court.

3.8 Another tennis court building was constructed during the reign of James I in around 1625-26 and accounts of this new building provide further evidence that an earlier tennis court existed in this same location: '*Ripping and taking downe the bourded walles round about the Tennis courte, and bringing upp a brickewall there for the enlargement of the same*' (Gregory, A, 2007, p.5). The east and north walls of the structure were most probably Wolsey's boundary walls with two windows with a view onto the park. This phase of the building seems to have been an open tennis court but by 1630-7 further improvements were made including the addition of a roof and buttresses.

3.9 In 1636-7 major renovation works were carried out with the erection of scaffolding along the east wall in order to increase its height, and it is believed that the original roof was taken down and replaced at the same time. During this same period a covered passageway was built between the court and palace.

3.10 In the 1660's Charles II built yet another new Tennis court on the site of James I's building, the style of which was influence by the tennis court he played at in Saint-Germain during his exile in Europe. However, only three of its outer walls were new. The eastern wall, which was heavily buttressed, was still the original Tudor wall of 1537.

3.11 During the reigns of William and Mary, and Anne between 1689 and 1714, the palace tennis court was used as a timber store and later during the reign of George I it was used a Drawing Room to host large gatherings and was redecorated to suit this new function. After this period the condition of the building became increasingly poor until the first quarter of the 19th century when it was decided that the building should be put into a proper state of repair. The building underwent a number of repairs and modifications throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, including after bomb damage in 1944.

Previous Archaeological investigations

3.12 In the early 90's a proposal was put forward to build a new Real Tennis Court to the north of the nursery ground and to the west of the Royal Tennis Court. Historic Royal Palaces commissioned Oxford Archaeology to carry out a series of evaluation trenches, the first of which was excavated in 1994 located within the northern arm of the Tudor moat. The



foundations of a number of 19th century brick structures and a garden border were exposed. On the basis of these results the proposals were rejected and a new location was proposed to the east end of the Melon Yard. Oxford Archaeology was re-employed to carry out 7 test trenches (HCP 025). These trenches revealed a number of garden deposits and features as well as several walls relating to Henry VIII's Close Bowling Alley. Structures pre-dating the Close Bowling alley were also uncovered. Ground-penetrating radar was also carried out around the same time and this together with the test pits suggested that some archaeology was present in the vicinity of the Melon Yard, although it possibly related mainly to the post-medieval garden use of the site.

- 3.13 In 2009 an excavation was carried out jointly by Time Team and Oxford Archaeology. Three trenches targeted the assumed site of Henry VIII's bowling alley, whilst five trenches targeted the likely positions of the Tiltyard towers. The eastern foundation of the bowling alley structure was revealed in trenches 1-3 with later additional buttress foundations uncovered in trenches 1 and 3. A possible western wall was also revealed beneath the existing garden wall, which may pre-date the bowling alley. There was also evidence for the demolition and robbing material from the bowling alley structure prior to the re-landscaping, thus returning the area to gardens.

4 **Description of Findings**

- 4.1 No archaeological features, structures or layers were uncovered during the course of the mitigation works. However, **Topsoil 1, subsoil 3/6** and the deposits associated with the installation of the drainage pipe were nonetheless recorded (2). A number of residual archaeological finds were collected including, china fragments, CBM (ceramic building material), animal bone and several clay pipe stems and bowls, varying from the mid-17th to early 18th century variety.

5 **Archive, Artefacts, and Ecofacts**

- 5.1 The paper archive consists of 6 HRP Pro Forma contexts sheets, 1 context register, 1 photographic register, miscellaneous maps and plans, and a sketch section on permatrace.
- 5.2 The physical, digital and paper archives will be deposited according to the HRP *Deposition of Archaeological Excavation Archives Guidelines 2015*.
- 5.3 Finds were uncovered in **contexts 1 and 2**; for details see Appendix I.
- 5.4 No environmental samples were taken.



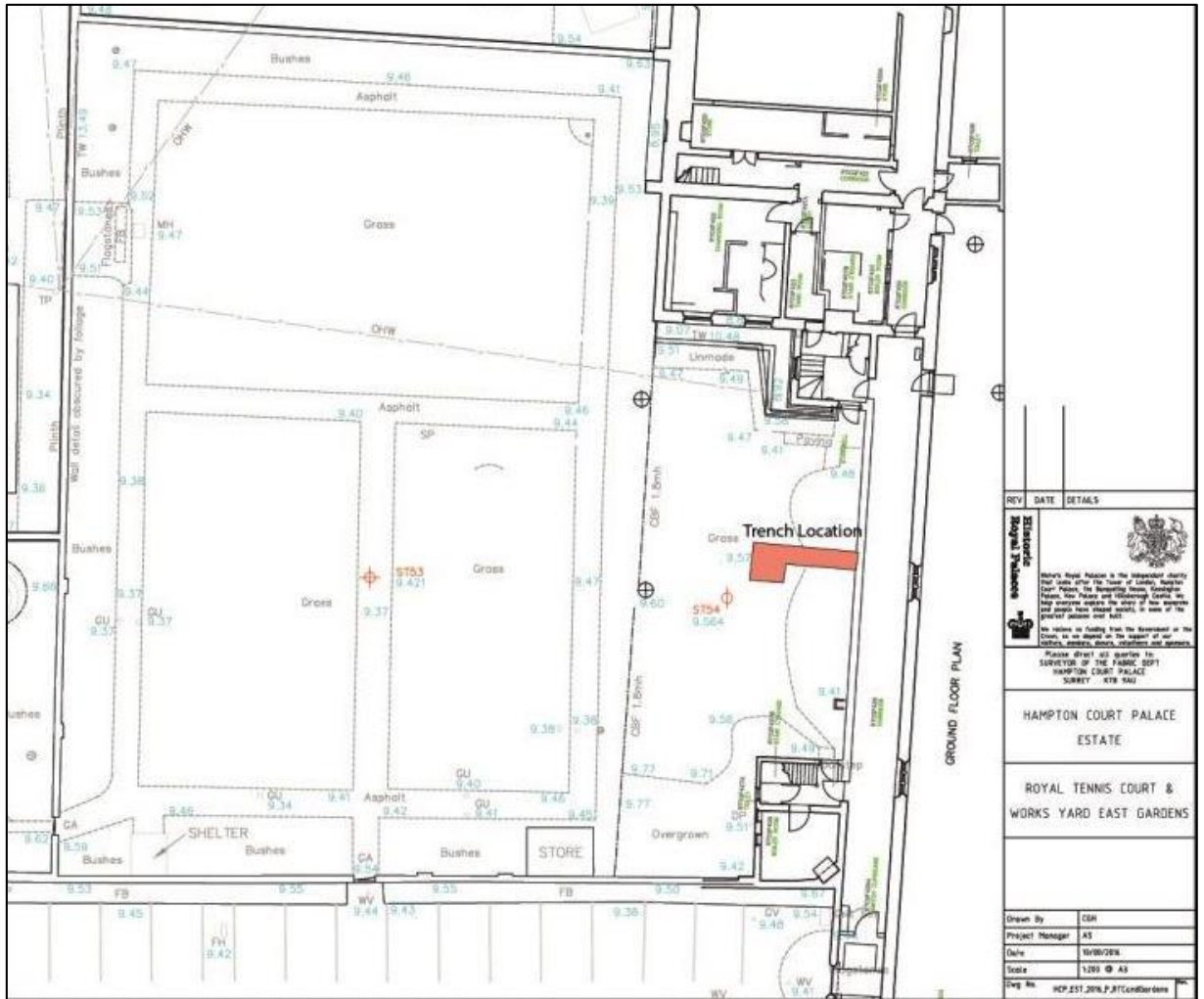


Figure 2: Trench location





Figure 3: Tennis Court Garden, looking towards the north



Figure 4: South-facing section showing pipe installation trench, context 4

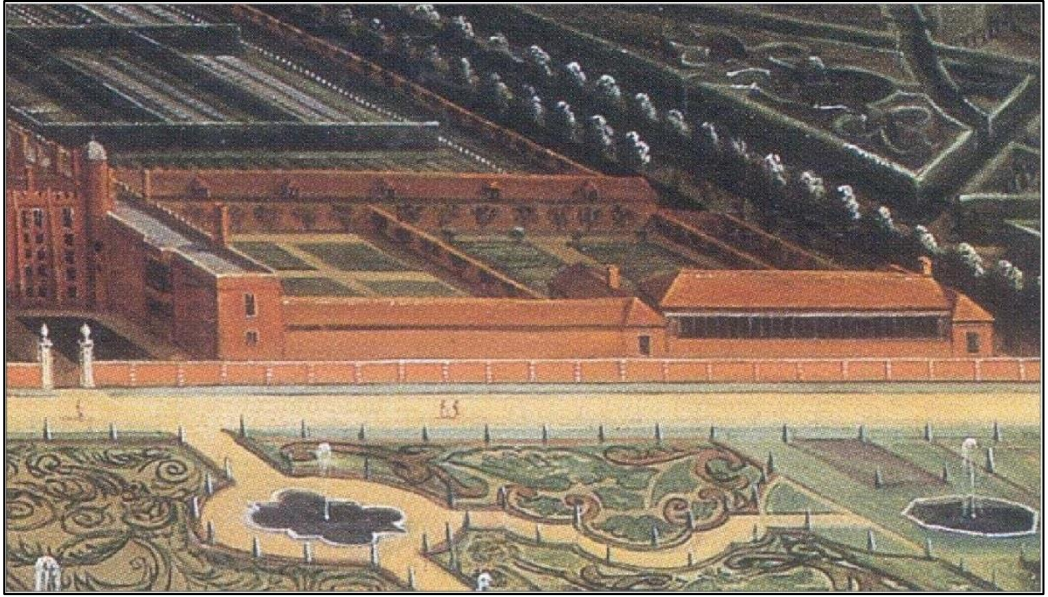


Figure 5: View from the east of the tennis court - Leonard Kynff c.1703

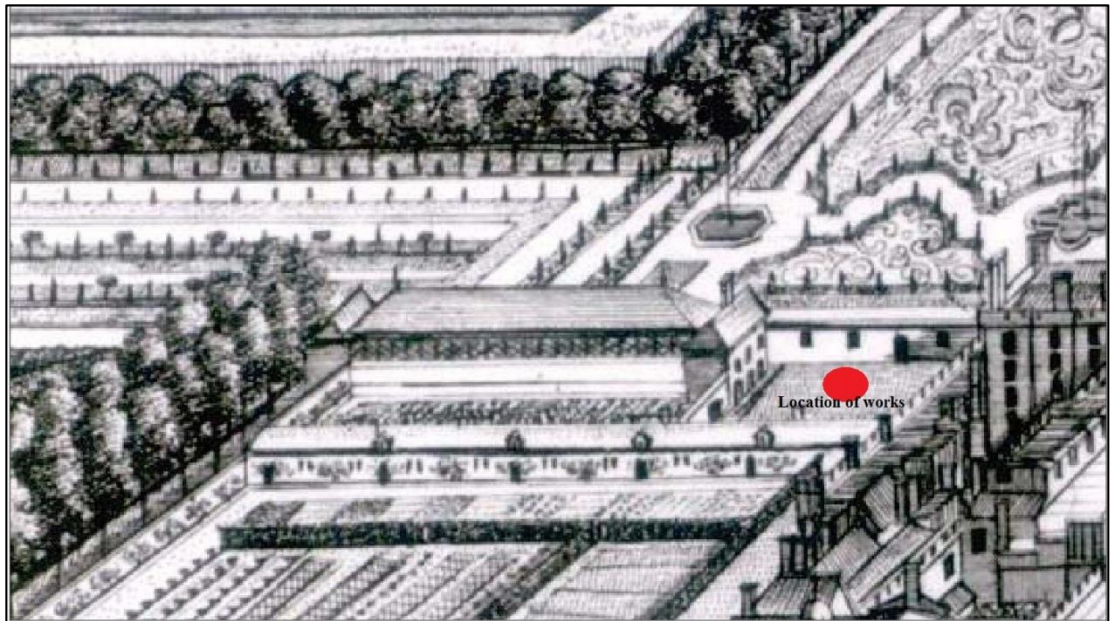


Figure 6: View of the tennis court from the west - Johannes Kip c.1707, and location of works.



Appendix

Context Register

Context	Description	Depth	Width/length/diameter	Finds
1	Topsoil	0.23m	N/A	Clay pipe, animal bone, china
2	Fill of cut 4	0.4m	0.6m	Clay pipe, animal bone, pottery/china, CBM
3	Subsoil, same as 3	0.6m	0.19-0.22m	
4	Cut for pipe installation	0.4m	0.6m	
5	Sandy deposit	0.2m	N/A	
6	Same as 3	0.6m	N/A	

Photographic Register

Image No	Description	View	Scale
1	General View of Royal Tennis Court Garden	N	N/A
2	General view of the trench	E	N/A
3	General location of trench	E	N/A
4	Working shot	W	N/A
5	South-facing section, contexts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	N	1m
6	Oblique view of south-facing section, contexts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	NW	0.5m
7	South-facing section, contexts 1, 2, 4, 5	N	0.5m
8	General view of installation trench	E	N/A
9	North-facing section, contexts 1, 2, 4, 5	S	1m
10	Working shot	E	N/A
11	South-facing section, contexts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	N	1m
12	General view of installation trench	E	N/A
13	South-facing section, contexts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	N	N/A
14	North-facing section, contexts 1, 2, 4, 5	S	N/A
15	General view of trench location	SW	N/A
16	Installation of pipes	E	N/A



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OASIS ID: **historic9-261357**

Project details

Project name	Royal Tennis Court Foul Drainage Replacement, Hampton Court Palace
Short description of the project	A watching brief was carried out in August 2016 in the Royal Tennis Court Garden at Hampton Court Palace during the installation of a new foul water drainage system. The area had some potential for uncovering new archaeological material related to the construction of both the current tennis court building and earlier phases of this same structure. There was also potential to uncover the remains of earlier features and structures in this specific area of the palace that had not been subject to any previous archaeological exploration. During the course of the watching brief, no archaeological features or structures were uncovered, only a few residual finds were gathered.
Project dates	Start: 22-08-2016 End: 26-08-2016
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HCP 149 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 8 - Land dedicated to the display of a monument
Monument type	REAL TENNIS COURT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON RICHMOND UPON THAMES RICHMOND UPON THAMES Royal tennis Court Garden, Hampton Court Palace
Postcode	KT8 9AU
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 15824 68543 51.403570334104 -0.334671873813 51 24 12 N 000 20 04 W Point

<https://oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm>

30/09/2016



Project creators

Name of Organisation Historic Royal Palaces
Project brief originator Historic Royal Palaces
Project design originator Historic Royal Palaces
Project director/manager David McDonough
Project supervisor Alexandra Stevenson

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Historic Royal Palaces
Physical Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","other"
Digital Archive recipient Historic Royal Palaces
Digital Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","other"
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Text"
Paper Archive recipient Historic Royal Palaces
Paper Contents "none"
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Miscellaneous Material","Report"

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