



***PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOMES DEVELOPMENT ON LAND AT MILLS CRESCENT,  
SEAL, KENT.***

***An Archaeological Assessment.***

***Client:*** *West Kent Housing Association.*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background:

- 1.1.1 Avalon Heritage Ltd (AHL) has been commissioned by the West Kent Housing Association (the applicant) to prepare an Archaeological Assessment (AA) in relation to an application to be submitted to Sevenoaks District Council (the LPA,) for planning consent for a residential development comprising 13 affordable rented homes alongside a new access route and landscaping on land at Mills Crescent, Seal in Kent (the proposed development area, PDA, Figure 1). The development will also entail the demolition of two existing modern properties to enable construction of the access road. The PDA is approximately 1.03ha in size and is situated to the east of Mills Crescent and to the rear of properties which front the estate road (Figure 2). The PDA is currently laid down to rough pasture.
- 1.1.2 Although there are no known heritage assets, designated or undesignated, recorded on the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) within the PDA the possibility of hitherto unidentified buried archaeological remains being present there is a consideration. Pre-application comments from the LPA have highlighted the PDA as within an Area of Archaeological Potential. As a consequence, the applicant has commissioned an Archaeological Assessment to support the planning application.
- 1.1.3 The primary aim of this report is to assess the potential for the presence of buried archaeological remains within the PDA, along with their potential date and significance so that the LPA is appropriately informed when assessing impacts on the significance of those assets, from the proposed scheme.
- 1.1.4 This report has been undertaken with reference to guidance prepared by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and Historic England and following consultation of planning guidance on the historic environment published by Sevenoaks District Council. In particular, the following guidance has been used in the preparation of this report:
- Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment, Good Practice in Planning 2 Historic England 2015;
  - Statements of Heritage Significance: Historic England Advice Note 12 2019.
  - The Setting of Heritage Assets, Good Practice in Planning 3 Historic England 2017;
  - Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance April Historic England 2008;
  - Standards and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Cifa 2014, rev 2017;
  - Code of Conduct, Cifa 2014. Rev. 2019;
  - Understanding Place Historic Area Assessments, Historic England 2017;
  - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) rev. 2019
  - Planning Practice Guidance 2019;
  - Sevenoaks Local Plan, Core Strategy, 2011;
  - Seal Conservation Area Appraisal, SDC 2019.
- 1.1.5 This HS has also been written in accordance with Chapter 16, *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, of the NPPF, particularly paragraphs 189 and 190. The following sources have been consulted in the preparation of this report:
- The Kent Historic Environment Record (HER);
  - Online sources including British History Online;
  - The National Heritage List (Historic England);
  - Historic OS maps online;
  - The Genealogist (thegenealogist.co.uk, for census and birth, death and Tithe map info);
  - Britain from Above <https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/>;
  - British Geological Survey;
  - Lidar and aerial photographs.
- 1.1.6 A site visit was undertaken by the author of this report in order to assess the current condition of the PDA and to identify whether any earthwork evidence is present which might indicate the presence of archaeological remains.

- 1.1.7 This report should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement/Planning Statement and with any architect's plans and drawings submitted with the application.
- 1.1.8 This report has been written by Helen Martin-Bacon, B.A., M.A., PgDip., MCIFA and affiliate member of the IHBC. She is the Founder and Principal Heritage Consultant at Avalon Heritage Ltd and has 30 years of experience working within the historic environment specialising in the preparation of Heritage Statements, Archaeological Assessments and Historic Building Assessments within planning led environments.

## **1.2 The PDA:**

- 1.2.1 The PDA is situated at the northeastern edge of the built-up area of Seal. To the north, east and south the PDA looks out on an undeveloped landscape which is largely rural in character (Plates 1, 2 & 3). The topography of the PDA slopes gently from west to east and extends down to a drainage ditch which runs north to south along the eastern edge of the PDA, separating the field in which the PDA is located from an adjacent field. To the south of the PDA the ground rises up quite steeply to form a ridge of high ground on which Seal's medieval church is situated (Plate 4).
- 1.2.2 No clear evidence of earthworks was observed within the development boundary during the site walkover and the ground there is generally flat with tussocky rough grazing. However, the field to the immediate east of the PDA contains a number of earthworks though their form and pattern could not be clearly delineated on the ground (Plate 5). The hedge which follows the line of the drainage channel at the eastern end of the PDA is fairly sinuous and dense in character and likely represents a historic field boundary.
- 1.2.3 The built-up area to the west of the PDA is a post war estate with modern infill comprising brick houses with rear gardens and parking to the fore (Plate 6).

## **1.3 Geological and landform context of the PDA.**

- 1.3.1 The PDA sits on an island of Folkestone Formation Sandstone bedrock which is surrounded by Sandgate Formation Sandstone and Mudstone. Superficial geological deposits comprise river terrace gravels and alluvium. The village itself sits on the Greensand Ridge from which the stone used in many village buildings comes. To the north is the Vale of Holmesdale with Guzzle Brook, a tributary of the River Darent, running through it. Beyond that rises the chalk escarpment of the North Downs. Views over the vale towards the downs are possible from Seal.
- 1.3.2 The Greensand Ridge referred to previously is an extensive, prominent, often wooded, mixed greensand/sandstone escarpment running through much of Surrey and Kent. The ridge enters Kent to the west of Oxted and Westerham and continues eastwards towards Sevenoaks, the latter known locally as the Chart Hills. It continues eastwards past Sevenoaks, until it is broken by the valley of the River Medway. To the north of the ridge the land drops steeply down into the Vale of Holmesday and to the south of the ridge the land drops steeply down into an area of low-lying land which was originally heavily wooded (*Sevenoaks Greensand Commons Project, KCC & SDC 2018*).
- 1.3.3 The River Darent, to the north of the PDA, is a major landscape feature which rises from springs at Westerham and runs eastwards towards Sevenoaks through the Vale of Holmesday where it turns northwards towards the Thames Estuary. Many of the small streams which run through the surrounding hamlets and villages are tributaries of the River Darent (*ibid*).

## **1.4 Historic context:**

- 1.4.1 Seal is situated on the ancient Saxon Road from Winchester to Maidstone and is mentioned in Domesday. In early documents the name of the village is often given as *Sele, Sale, Zela* or *La Sela* and it is suggested that the place name may derive from the Anglo-Saxon word *sole* or *sol* meaning *a muddy or wallowing place* or *a muddy pond that overflows*. From earliest times up until at least the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was a predominantly agricultural community, with pasture, arable and fruit growing. Hops were also grown locally from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards (CAA, Part II. 2019).
- 1.4.2 The oldest parts of the parish church date to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the village green, on the north side of the High Street, was being encroached upon as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century. There are at least four medieval hall houses in the village.

- 1.4.3 The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the growth of the village and a number of high-status houses were built in the village. Encroachment onto the village continued during this period and a number of medieval houses were modernised with new brick or tile facades reflecting the architectural fashions of the Georgian period (ibid).
- 1.4.4 By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the local economy was still mainly based on agriculture, and other trades such as blacksmiths, wheelwrights, harness-makers, saddlers and farriers were undertaken in the village. A particular specialism was developed in the manufacture of edged tools. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the expansion of the building stock in the village, much of the development being associated with a local benefactor, Lord Hillingdon who lived at nearby Widernesse (ibid).
- 1.4.5 Seal expanded substantially in the 1920s with developments to the north of the historic village, a mixture of public and private housing. After the Second World War, agriculture was still the principal local industry. The village continued to grow after the war and Seal turned from an agriculturally based economy to one based on commuting.

## **1.5 Historic Environment Record.**

- 1.5.1 A search of the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) with a search area of 1km from the PDA's boundaries established that it does not contain, or is near to, any designated sites such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments or historic parks and gardens. Nor does the PDA contain any entries relating to non-designated archaeological sites or previous archaeological investigation within its boundary.

## **1.6 Paleolithic.**

- 1.6.1 The Paleolithic period is well attested within the Sevenoaks area mainly in the form of findspots and groups of finds located in head brickearth/gravel contexts to the east of Sevenoaks. With regard to the PDA specifically a number of finds of this period have been found within the search area including struck flints found during fieldwalking (TQ 55 NW 122 and TQ 55 NW 123) and a hand axe recovered during an archaeological investigation in 2015 in Sevenoaks Quarry (TQ 55 NW 368).

## **1.7 Mesolithic.**

- 1.7.1 As with the preceding Paleolithic period, there appears to be a concentration of Mesolithic finds in the area to the east of Sevenoaks represented by single artefacts as well as more substantial groups of tools that include a variety typologies. For example, at Otford approximately 3km north west of the PDA numerous finds of the period were made including an assemblage of over fourteen implements containing microliths, scrapers and part of a polished axe. Many of the Mesolithic sites identified in the surrounding landscape show evidence of repeated use and there is also evidence of continuity from the Paleolithic to the Mesolithic periods and in turn, from the Mesolithic period to the Neolithic period (Greensand CP, 2018).
- 1.7.2 Mesolithic finds have been identified within the search area of the PDA including blade flints and microliths to the north east of the PDA (MKE72536), two struck flints from a trench during an evaluation at Sevenoaks Quarry in association with a number of post holes (TQ 55 NW 335), a blade findspot from Seal (TQ 55 NE 57) and blades and a scraper south west of the road towards Child's Bridge (TQ 55 NW 67).

## **1.8 Neolithic.**

- 1.8.1 In general, in the Sevenoaks area traces of Neolithic settlement are elusive being characterised by a few features and scatters of finds for example from Greenhill, near Otford where a late Neolithic/ Bronze Age settlement was identified by an area of burning alongside a scatter of occupational debris, including Peterborough and Beaker wares. There was also evidence of extensive flint working nearby. The site was interpreted as the temporary settlement of a small group of people practising seasonal upland grazing in a clearing. The most numerous Neolithic finds in the area comprise individual or small groups of flints and whether these suggest Neolithic activity, occupation or settlement they show that during the period people made widespread use of the landscape. There is also no evidence of the Neolithic enclosures in the area whereas they are characteristic in other parts of Kent. Their absence may arise from the fact that there was only low-level activity and settlement in the area around Sevenoaks and Seal (ibid).

- 1.8.2 The number of entries on the HER for the Neolithic era similarly suggests a low level of activity, finds being largely confined to finds of flints and prehistoric pottery. An archaeological evaluation for the extension of the Sevenoaks Quarry in 2006 identified a series of postholes, one of which contained a single sherd of prehistoric pottery of possible Neolithic date with another posthole yielding two struck flints dated to the early Mesolithic through to late Neolithic periods (TQ 55 NW 335). Part of a Neolithic flint axe was also found at Child's Bridge (TQ 55NW15).

## 1.9 Bronze Age to Iron Age.

- 1.9.1 The scarcity of Neolithic evidence in the area around Sevenoaks and Seal continued into the Bronze Age and in contrast to other parts of Kent there is little evidence for large-scale exploitation of the landscape or of settlement during this period, although a number of round barrows have been identified at Otford Mount, Millpond Wood and at Watery Lane, Kemsing near to Seal. It is expected that a great many more barrows exist in the area but have yet to be identified (ibid).
- 1.9.2 Nearer to the PDA a gully, containing a sherd of Bronze Age pottery, was uncovered during archaeological excavation in 2014 at Sevenoaks Quarry (TQ 55 NW 375). Also identified in the quarry were two ditches and a sub-circular enclosure, one of the ditches containing a flint flake and three sherds of Bronze Age pottery (TQ 55 NW 71).
- 1.9.3 Within the Sevenoaks area there is relatively little evidence of Iron Age settlement and the landscape was still probably mostly thickly wooded and it is difficult to estimate how densely the area was populated during this period. Again, this may be due to the fact that settlements have yet to be identified in the landscape (ibid).
- 1.9.4 However, within the search area of the PDA, Iron Age settlement was located during works for the extension of Sevenoaks Quarry. A magnetometry survey undertaken there in 2008 confirmed the existence of multiple enclosures and associated roundhouse dwellings. The largest of the enclosures was around 70m in diameter. Another square enclosure with a trackway leading into it from the south east was identified along with a smaller *banjo* enclosure. Within the enclosure multiple features were identified including pits, hut circles and areas of burning. This evidence shows that although the Sevenoaks and Seal areas do not contain the same density of settlement activity in the Iron Age as other parts of Kent, there was occupation and activity present during this period (ibid).
- 1.9.5 The HER appears to confirm a low level of Iron Age activity in the search area with no entries relating directly to Iron Age findspots or activity, apart from those found during excavations in the Sevenoaks Quarry.

## 1.10 Romano-British.

- 1.10.1 For this part of western Kent there are numerous sites from which an idea of how the landscape developed in the Roman period may be gleaned. The overall character of the landscape changed very little and there is a high degree of continuity between earlier Iron Age settlements and new Roman sites. A concentration of villa sites, probably representing the centres of large estates in the Darent Valley, spread northwards and included the villa at Otford, approximately 3km north west of Seal. There was also an increase in the population at this time as evidenced by numerous cremation burials. Alongside the villas, the archaeological record also reveals the presence of single farmsteads in the landscape (ibid).
- 1.10.2 The area is crossed by a number of Roman routes. The Pilgrims Way, probably in origin a prehistoric trackway located approximately 1.6km north of Seal, was a main arterial route during this period and there have been numerous Roman sites identified along its route or close by, including the villa at Otford, the kiln and cemetery site at Frog Farm (4km north west of Seal), the bath house near Kemsing, the cemeteries at Kemsing and Patch Grove Woods as well as a vast quantity of small finds including coins and items of adornment such as rings and brooches (ibid).
- 1.10.3 Within the vicinity of the PDA the HER records a number of findspots of the Roman period including a tile (TQ 55 NW 11), possible Roman pits found during an evaluation at Sevenoaks Quarry in 2006 (TQ 55NW 109), a sherd of Roman pottery found during fieldwalking ahead of the extension of Sevenoaks Quarry (TQ 55 NW 122), a Roman silver denarius of Elagabalus circa 218AD (MKE72382) found just west of the PDA along with a Roman copper alloy coin dated from circa 317AD to 320 AD) found within the boundary of the PDA (MKE72384).

### 1.11 Early Medieval.

- 1.11.1 As with other parts of Kent archaeological evidence of the area around Sevenoaks and Seal is mainly confined to burials, with cemeteries providing information about many aspects of Anglo-Saxon society. However, within the landscape of this area archaeological evidence of this period is scarce although there are a number of features that are likely to have originated in this period.
- 1.11.2 For example, the modern rural settlement pattern of scattered individual settlements had its origins in this period and Seal itself had its origins during the early medieval period. The Chart Hills, the name *Chart* being found in many place names such as *Seal Chart*, was a huge impenetrable forest during this period characterised by poor heavy soils which were not suited to cultivation (ibid).
- 1.11.3 The HER has an almost total lack of entries for this period in the search area of the PDA apart from the findspot of an Anglo-Saxon silver penny of Offa dated 757 AD to 796 AD (TQ 55 NE 215). Although Seal is probably an Anglo-Saxon foundation, its historic core is some distance to the south of the PDA, and it is possible that the latter was then situated in the settlement's hinterland of fields or woods. This would perhaps explain the lack of finds of this period around the PDA.

### 1.12 Medieval.

- 1.12.1 The medieval period in Kent generally was marked by a considerable increase in the population which meant that the landscape now had to cater for an expanded demand not just in terms of settlement but also in terms of land to support a larger population. Not only did this period witness the emergence of a number of new settlements within the area, including Sevenoaks and Seal, there was a concomitant rise in the number of scattered rural farmsteads and assarting of marginal lands such as in the wooded Chart Hills (ibid).
- 1.12.2 This situation may be reflected in the almost total absence of medieval finds from the search area and PDA, excluding of course the nucleated settlement of Seal. The HER records only a single medieval copper alloy seal matrix (MKE72383) found to the west of the PDA suggesting that, as in the preceding Anglo-Saxon period, the latter was situated beyond the limits of settlement at Seal in a peripheral area which experienced a very low level of activity. It is possible, however, that some of the irregular field boundaries which the HLC identifies around the PDA resulted from medieval enclosure of the prevailing wooded landscape.

### 1.13 Post Medieval.

- 1.13.1 It was in this period that the landscape, including communications routes, settlements and the layout of farmland took on much of the form it has today. Many of the people who lived in the Sevenoaks and Seal area would have worked within the growing agricultural economy, helping to create the wide variety of different produce that was in demand. The modern layout of parishes, with the exception of dense 20<sup>th</sup> century housing developments located in and around the villages, was established during this period and was probably substantially in place by the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There were still areas of marginal land such as the Greensand Commons and Edward Hasted in his *Topographical Survey of Kent* (1797) mentions Seal Common in which he states that *Seal parish has, in the upper part of it, much waste ground in which is a dreary barren sand, consisting in this and the adjoining parishes eastward, of several hundred acres, being in general covered with heath and furze, with some scrubby wood interspersed among the hills* (ibid).
- 1.13.2 Many of the former medieval hamlets and villages developed and expanded in the post medieval centuries. In Seal, for example, there are at least fourteen structures that were constructed during the 16<sup>th</sup> century and a further nine at least in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is also likely that during this period some of the commons were maintained mainly for use as common land for rough pasture and rights of pannage etc.
- 1.13.3 The post-medieval period within the search area of the PDA is well attested on the HER with entries relating to buildings within the village and to dispersed farmsteads and outfarms dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries scattered around the landscape. The proliferation of single farmsteads is perhaps connected to the gradual enclosure of waste land and/or earlier medieval fields around the village of Seal during the post-medieval period, as evidenced by the surrounding fieldscape.



- 1.13.4 The HER also appears to suggest that the farmsteads and outfarms were predominantly located to the south east and south of the PDA (MKE83824, MKE83827, MKE3828, MKE38326, MKE83853 and MKE83854) with only two examples to the west and northwest (MKE83825 and MKE83823). In terms of other types of feature the HER does not contain any entries for findspots or archaeological sites within the search area of the PDA and the entries are mainly dominated by entries relating to buildings in the village of Seal and to farmsteads and outfarms.
- 1.13.5 However, the archaeological evaluation undertaken in 2006 in Sevenoaks Quarry identified the presence of a post-medieval pit which yielded charcoal, bricks and tiles (TQ 55NW 109). There is also an entry which relates to the park at Kemsing mentioned in documents of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its location was thought to be lost but part of its boundary is shown on large-scale maps of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century although a field investigation in 1996 revealed that little, if any trace of the park pale can now be seen (TQ 55 NW 327).
- 1.13.6 In addition, during an archaeological excavation in 2015 in Sevenoaks Quarry three post-medieval features were noted comprising a ditch, a structure and a wall. The ditch which ran between the structure and the wall contained ceramic material of post-medieval date. Both the structure and wall were formed from a single course of bricks with mortar (TQ 55 NW 367). A medieval and post-medieval deer park is also recorded to the north west of the search area around the PDA although it is not known whether any boundary features survive (TQ 55 NW 408).
- 1.13.7 The site of a mill is recorded to the north west of the PDA, its location legible from the presence of earthworks constructed to create a head pond above the mill (TQ 55 NW 74).

#### **1.14 Cartographic Evidence.**

- 1.14.1 Cartographic evidence from the time of the 1841 Tithe Map through to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Figures 3 to 5) show the PDA to have been located in an isolated area within a field pattern of irregular enclosure/assarting. The maps show settlement focused around the main routes into Seal. The fieldscape to the east of Seal on the 1841 Tithe Map is suggestive of enclosure of earlier medieval open fields with long, curving boundaries whilst to the north, where the PDA is located the field pattern is distinctly different being more irregular, perhaps suggesting that the medieval field system around Seal did not extend in to this area. Both the Tithe Map and the later OS Map 1871 suggest that by this period some of the farmsteads noted on the HER had appeared to the east and west of the PDA.
- 1.14.2 The OS Map of 1871 indicates that between 1841 and 1871 the field in which the PDA sits had been bifurcated by the line of the current drainage channel which the cartographic evidence suggests was deliberately constructed. The OS Map 1897 depicts a situation similar to that at the time of the 1871 map with the PDA still in an isolated location, although a couple of outfarms had appeared at the edges of two fields to the south. A footpath is also marked running north to south passing through the field adjacent to that containing the PDA.
- 1.14.3 By the time of the 1938 OS Map (Figure 6) there had again been remarkably little change in the surroundings of the PDA, but the map shows that to the south a right-angled trackway first shown on the Tithe Map in 1841 had been regularised and named *Childsbridge Way*. This seems to have coincided with the development of the fields to the west of the track. However, even at this later date the PDA was relatively isolated from the expansion of Seal.
- 1.14.4 Over the next thirty years however, the surroundings of the PDA changed considerably, and the OS Map of 1968 (Figure 7) shows that development had occurred in the fields to the west and south west of the PDA. A number of drains are now shown in fields to the east of the PDA suggesting that the ground there remained wet (this was noted during the site visit).

#### **1.15 Lidar**

- 1.15.1 Lidar of the PDA (Figure 8) depicts regular rows of north east to south west aligned linear features running through the PDA. These are most likely to represent field drainage channels, probably post-medieval in date rather than ridge and furrow of medieval date given that the land there is not suited to arable cultivation. The straight linear feature to the south of the PDA is a modern pipeline. The field adjacent to the PDA along with the field next to it are shown to contain a series of earthwork features and this was confirmed by the site visit. It is most likely that the features have resulted from long term trampling by livestock in boggy ground, although some of the features appear to have a degree of

regularity. The possibility therefore exists that the complex of earthworks represents hitherto unidentified settlement activity though this is unlikely. There is nothing in the cartographic evidence to corroborate a settlement in these fields and the wet nature of the ground perhaps weighs against this being a favourable spot for settlement. The earthworks are confined to the two fields adjacent to the PDA and there is no evidence that they continue into the development boundary.

### **1.16 The Archaeological Potential of the PDA.**

- 1.16.1 The desk-based research undertaken in the preparation of the AA has established that historically the PDA has remained undeveloped and that it was situated in an area peripheral to the main focus of settlement activity in the village. The HER contains no entries to suggest that prehistoric settlement was present within the PDA or within its immediate environs. However, findspots of Paleolithic through to Bronze Age/Iron Age date have been identified in the PDA's surroundings indicating that low-level activity was occurring during these periods.
- 1.16.2 More substantial evidence of prehistoric occupation was, however, identified during Phase 7 of a programme of archaeological investigations at Sevenoaks Quarry to the west of the PDA in 2018, comprising pits, postholes, ditches and gullies of late Bronze Age, Late Iron Age and early Roman in date. This was in contrast to other phases of archaeological work in the quarry which failed to identify much evidence of prehistoric occupation.
- 1.16.3 Taking into account the general paucity of evidence associated with occupation during the prehistoric period and into the Roman period in the search area of the PDA, it is considered that the PDA has low potential to contain features and deposits dating to these periods but has a low to moderate potential to contain artefactual material of these dates.
- 1.16.4 This is similarly the case with archaeological remains associated with the Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post medieval periods. Given the PDA's location away from the historic settlement at Seal in marginal ground which may have been wooded for at least the earlier part of this time span, it is most likely that the PDA was located on uncultivated ground which was gradually assarted to create rough pasture.
- 1.16.5 As a consequence of the lack of archaeological and artefactual material identified previously within the PDA and in its surrounds to date, it is considered that again there is low potential within the PDA for the presence of significant Anglo-Saxon, medieval or post medieval features and deposits but a low to moderate potential for artefactual material in the form of random finds.

## **2 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.**

- 2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) glossary describes significance as the value of a heritage asset to present and future generations because of its heritage interest. It also states that within a planning context significance may arise from the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest of a heritage asset or a combination of those heritage values. NPPF also provides a definition of setting as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. This report will adhere to the definitions set out in NPPF.
- 2.1.2 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that:

*In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*
- 2.1.3 In accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF the following assessment is intended to provide the LPA with a sufficient level of information regarding the potential significance of any archaeological remains within the PDA for them to exercise their planning judgement with regard to the currently proposed scheme.
- 2.1.4 The combined weight of the evidence gathered as part of this AA indicates that the PDA is unlikely to contain any buried archaeological remains of significance, of any date, meaning that in this case the PDA is unlikely to contain archaeological features or deposits which would inform in a meaningful way on past human activity within the PDA, within its hinterland or within the region in general.

### 3 PROPOSALS AND IMPACTS.

#### 3.1 Proposals:

- 3.1.1 The West Kent Housing Association are seeking planning consent to develop the PDA for affordable housing. The scheme comprises 13 units ranging from 1 bed flats through to 3- and 4-bedroom houses. The units will be arranged fronting onto an estate road which will access the development from the end of Mills Crescent. This will involve the demolition of two post-war houses. There will be parking to the front of the houses and gardens to the rear. The scheme will also involve some amenity planting. The *in-situ* mature tree standing within the PDA will be retained and a garden/public area created around it.

#### 3.2 Local Planning Context:

- 3.2.1 Local planning policy is contained in the Core Strategy of the Sevenoaks District Council's Local Development Framework. This document acknowledges that the district has a rich built and historic heritage, including listed buildings and conservation areas but also in terms of sites of archaeological interest. Policy SP1 states:

*The District's heritage assets and their settings, including listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains, ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, historic buildings, landscapes and outstanding views will be protected and enhanced.*

#### 3.3 Consideration of impacts:

- 3.3.1 Paragraph 190 of NPPF makes it clear that it is for the LPA to consider the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset but that they can take account of evidence that has been provided by the applicant.

*Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.*

- 3.3.2 As Archaeological Assessments should represent an impartial assessment of significance and should not act as advocacy documents for a particular scheme, the following comments regarding the scheme are intended only to aid the LPA in making its planning judgement regarding the impact of the scheme on the historic environment locally.
- 3.3.3 The PDA does not contain any demonstrable physical manmade feature that would elevate it above the level of historic rough pasture. The evidence presented in previous sections of this report suggests that there is low potential for buried archaeological deposits and features of any substance to be present within the development boundary. However, should any hitherto unidentified buried remains be present they would be destroyed or severely truncated by groundbreaking works to remodel the site prior to construction. This would constitute localised substantial harm to non-designated archaeological remains within the PDA and harm at the lower end of less than substantial to the wider archaeological resource.

### 4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1.1 When weighing the impact of a development on the significance of non-designated heritage assets the NPPF requires LPAs to balance the scale of any harm against the significance of the heritage asset.
- 4.1.2 With reference to this particular application, this report suggests that the balanced judgement required of the LPA should be based on the fact that, whilst construction activity would result in substantial harm to buried archaeological remains within the PDA should they be present, any remains which do survive within the development boundary are likely to be non-designated heritage assets of limited evidential value.
- 4.1.3 This AA has assessed the potential for, and significance of, archaeological remains within the PDA and highlighted factors which the LPA should take into account when assessing the impacts of the proposed scheme on the archaeological resource should elements of it survive within the PDA. The report has also fulfilled its role of providing the LPA with a sufficient and proportionate level of information for them to come to a balanced judgement about the proposed scheme as a whole and to form their own view on

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whether the scheme will constitute harm, less than substantial harm or substantial harm to any preserved archaeological remains within the PDA as required by NPPF.

## 5 REFERENCES

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# FIGURES

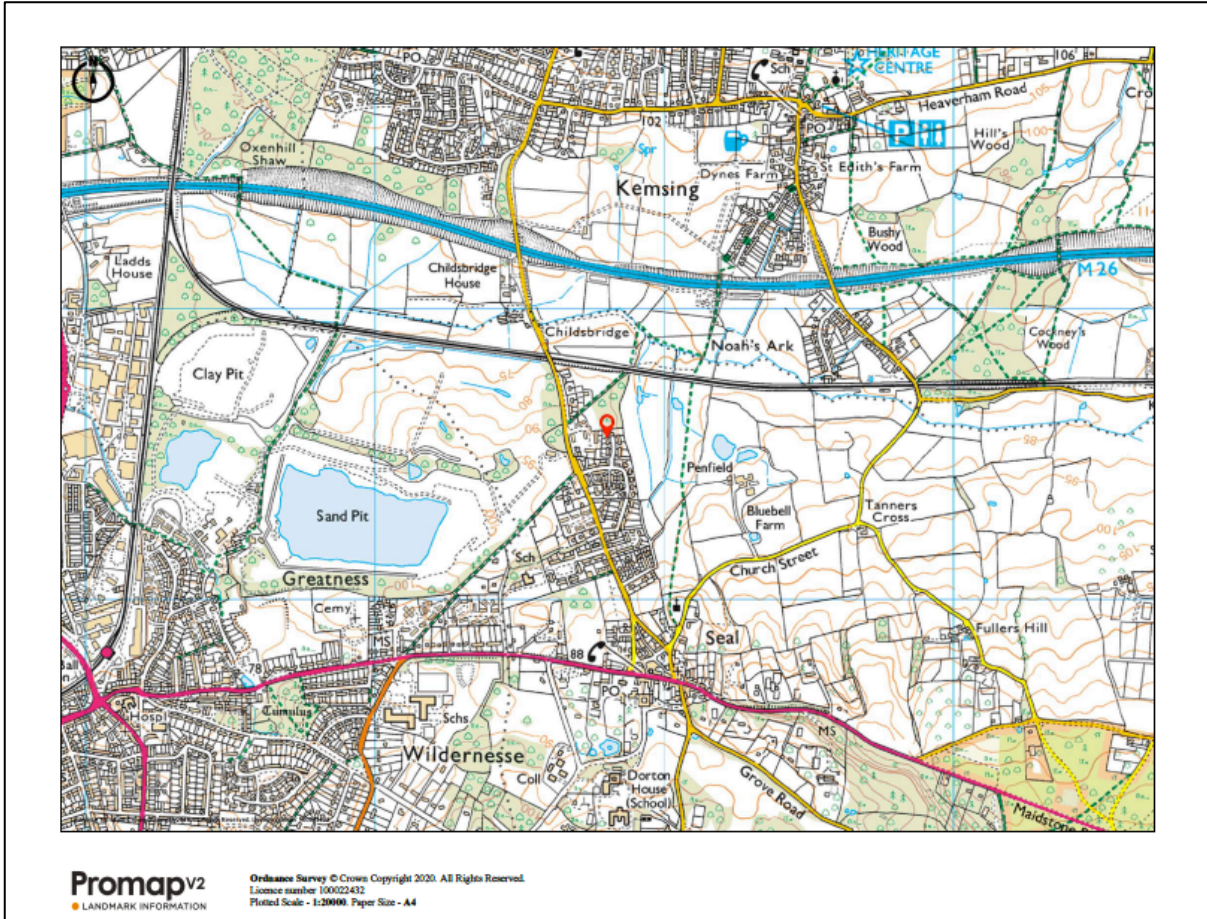


Figure 1. Location of the PDA.

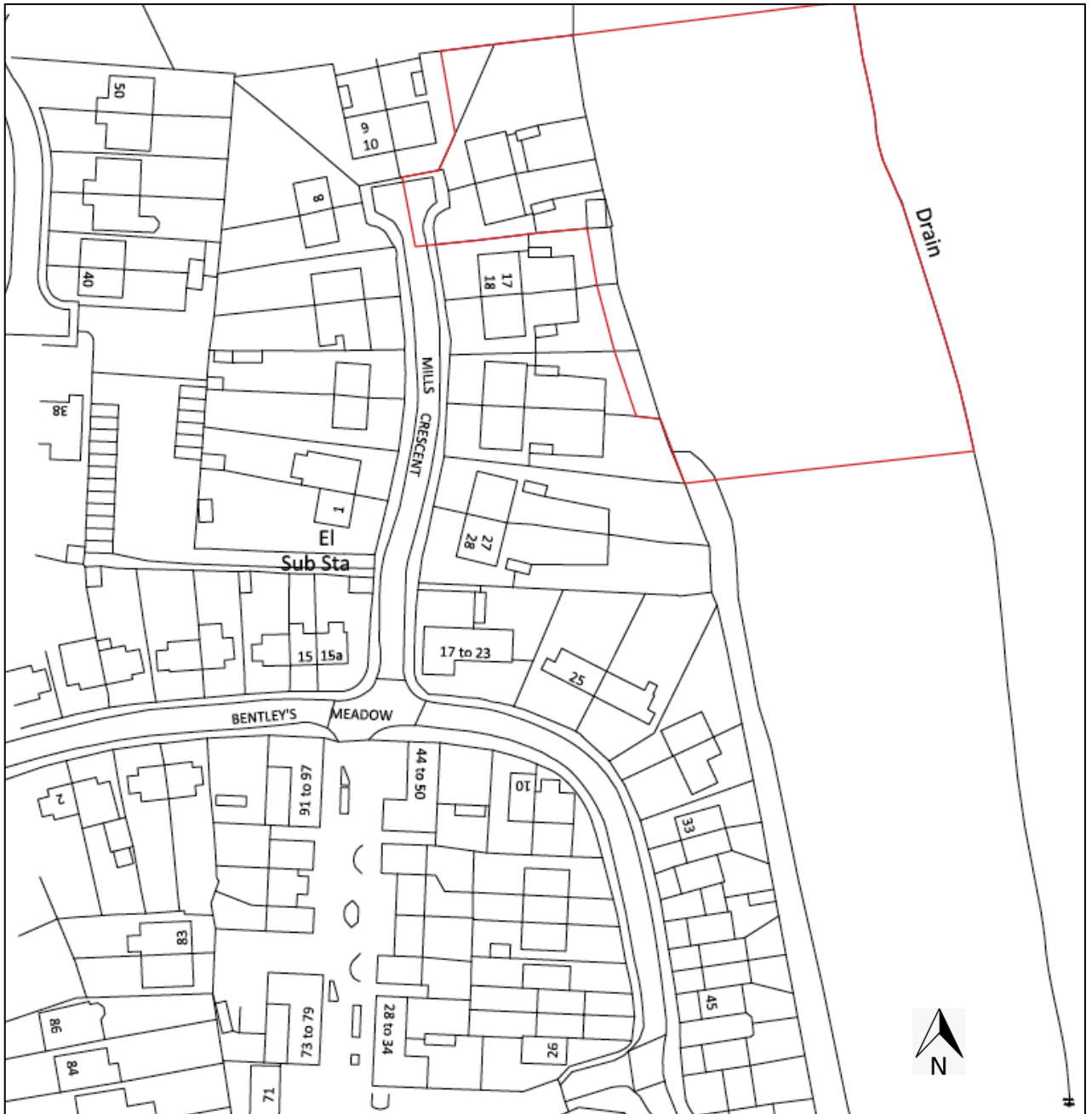


Figure 2. Redline boundary of the PDA.





Figure 3. Tithe Map of 1841.

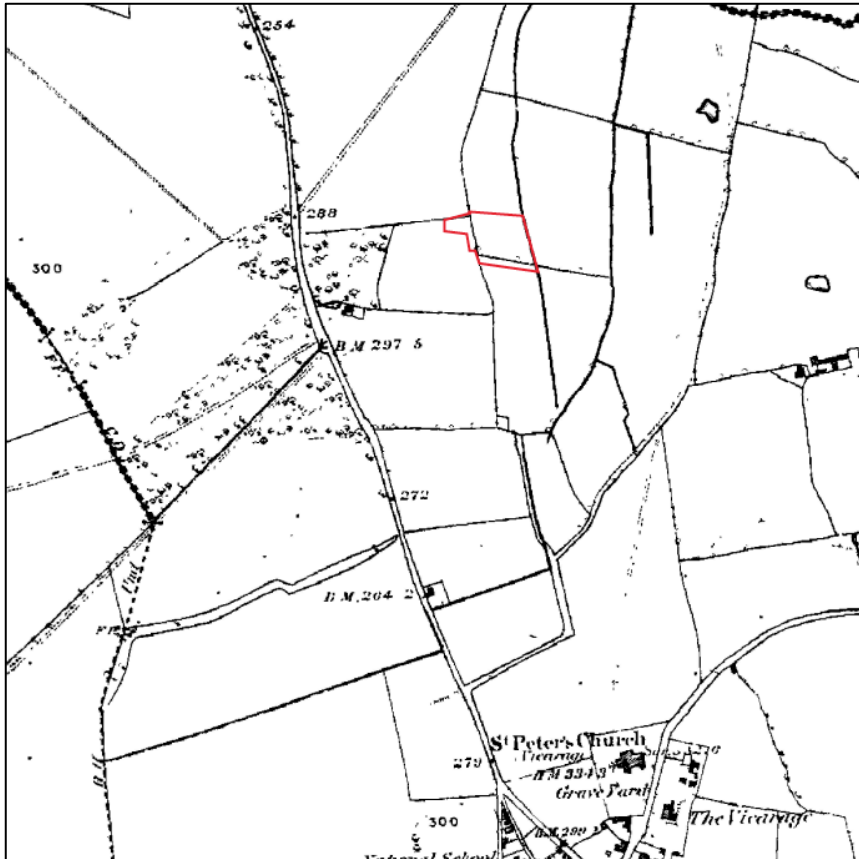


Figure 4. OS Map of 1871.

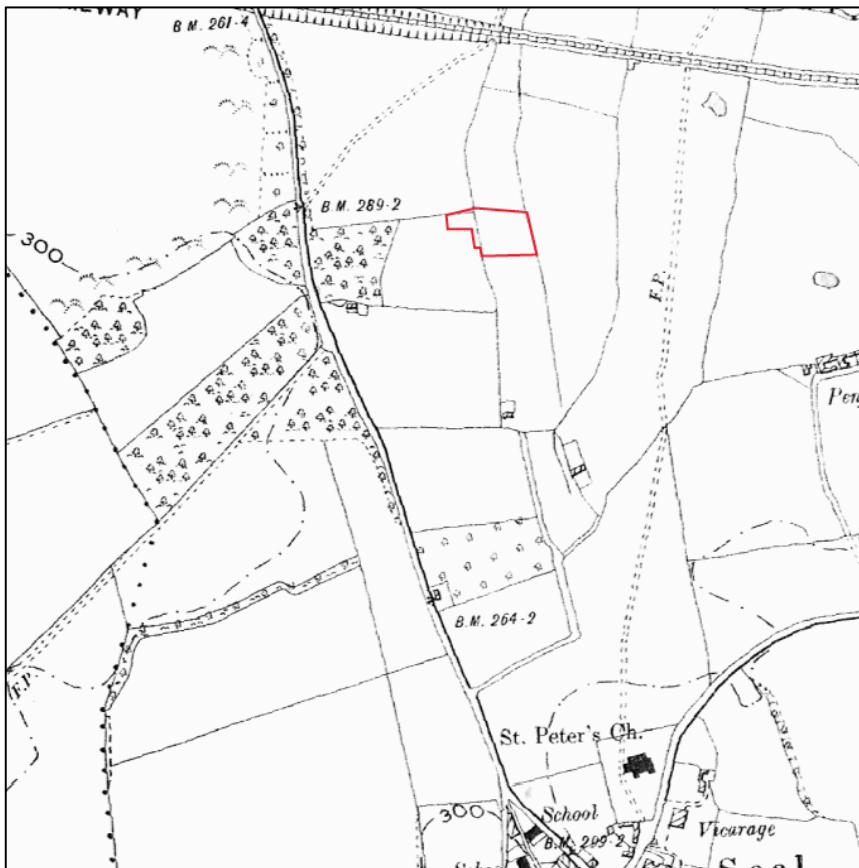


Figure 5. OS Map of 1897.

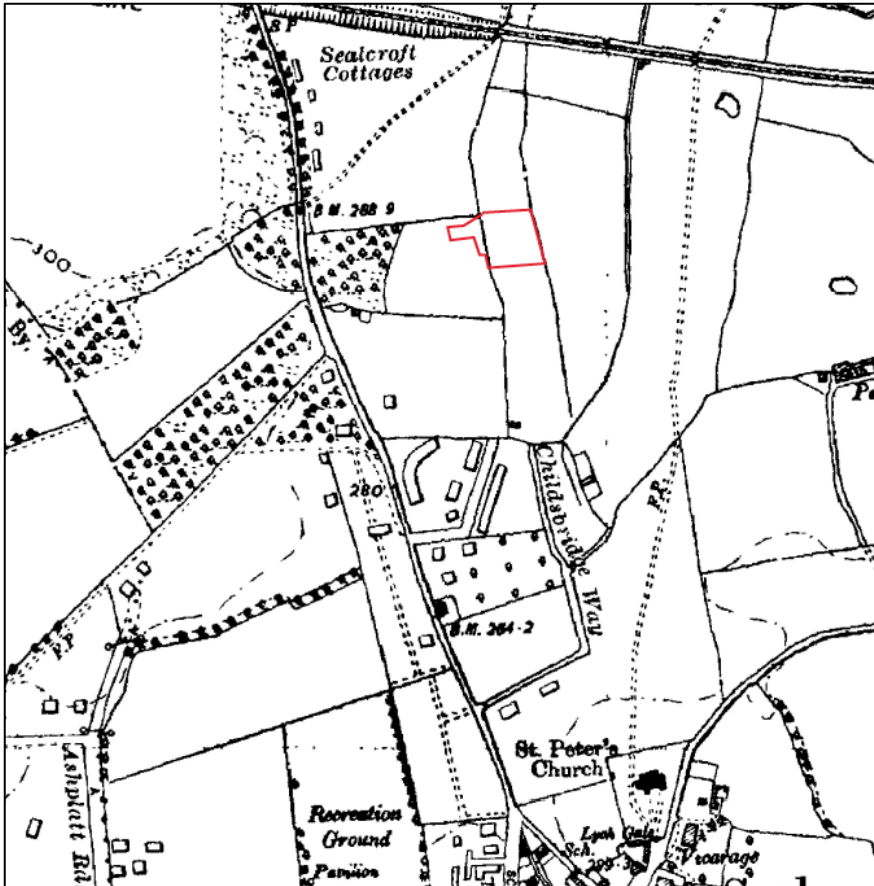


Figure 6. OS Map of 1938.



Figure 7. OS Map of 1968.

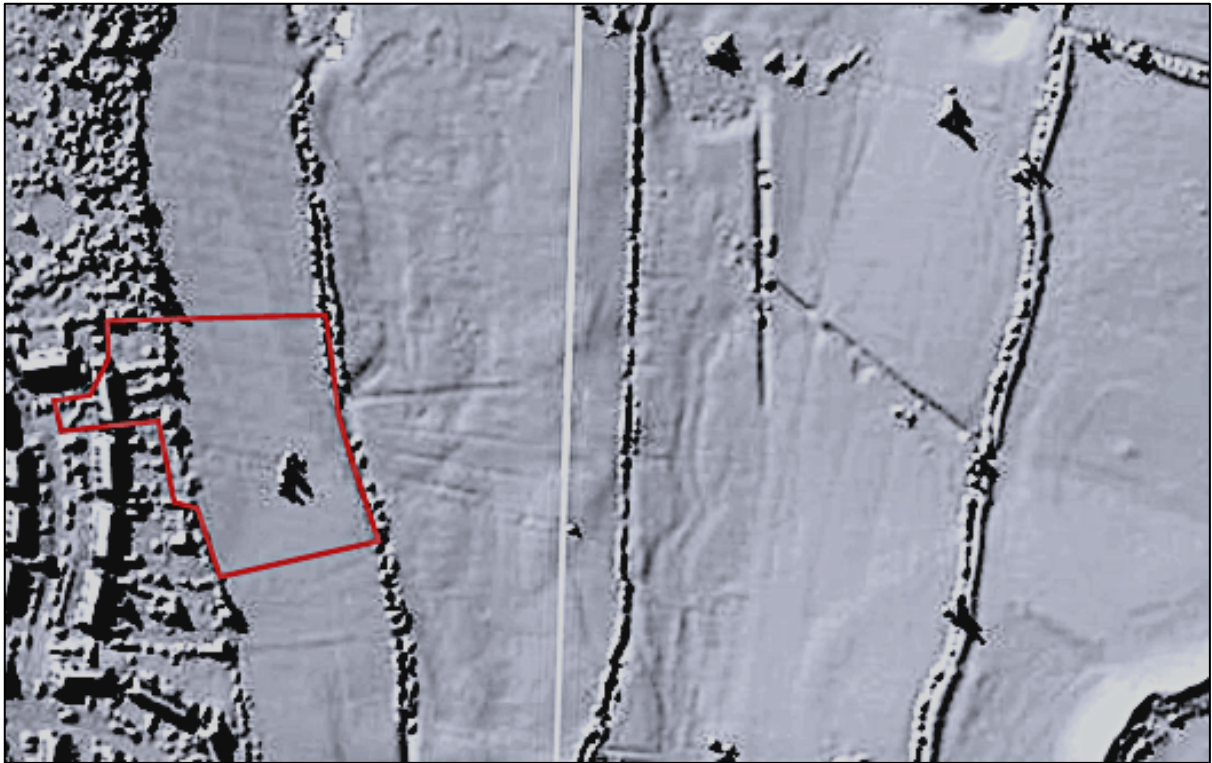


Figure 8. Lidar of the PDA and adjacent fields with earthworks.

# PLATES.



Plate 1. View from within the PDA looking east.



Plate 2. Approaching the PDA from the south. The large tree marks the south boundary of the PDA whilst the fencing in the distance marks its northern boundary.



Plate 3. Looking across the PDA from the northern boundary.



Plate 4. Looking south towards the ridge of high land with the church in the middle distance.



Plate 5. Earthworks in the field immediately east of the PDA with the drainage ditch to the bottom of the photograph.



Plate 6. Mills Crescent to the immediate west of the PDA.



#### HERITAGE SERVICES:

- Constraints reports and heritage risk assessments for land acquisition;
- Heritage Impact Assessments;
- Statements of Significance;
- Setting Assessments;
- Listed Building Appraisals;
- Historic Building Survey and Recording;
- Places of worship;
- Historic agricultural buildings;
- Desk-Based Assessments;
- Historic Landscape Survey;
- Analysis of historic and designed gardens.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES:

- Scoping and negotiation with LPAs;
- Preparation of WSIs and mitigation strategies;
- Project Management and set up of archaeological/geophysical surveys;
- Consultancy and advice;
- Co-ordination of fieldwork;
- Procurement.

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