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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Field Evaluation on
Land to the East of Hall Farm, & South
of Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Ravenstone
with Snibstone, Leicestershire.
(SK 439948 313850)**

James Patrick



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**An archaeological field evaluation on land to the East of Hall Farm,
& South of Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Ravenstone with Snibstone,
Leicestershire
(SK 43994 31385)**

James Patrick

for

Keller Construction Ltd.

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:



Date: 20.04.2016

Name: Patrick Clay

University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH

Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614

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An archaeological field evaluation on land East of Hall Farm, & South of Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Ravenstone with Snibstone, Leicestershire

(SK 43994 31385)

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Summary

An archaeological field evaluation by trial trenching was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on land East of Hall Farm, and south of Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire (SK 43994 31385).

The work was in advance of a proposed residential development (P.A.16/00020/7) of eight dwellings with associated access road and services. Six trenches were excavated across the footprints of the proposed dwellings.

Although there are known sites in the vicinity including the medieval village settlement core located to the north-east, no significant archaeological deposits were located during the evaluation. There was heavily disturbed and made up ground, chiefly to the north-east of the assessment area in Trenches 1-3. This may have been associated with landscaping connected with Ravenstone Hall. The archive for this work will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A52.2016.

Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) were commissioned by Keller Construction Ltd. to carry out an archaeological field evaluation on land East of Hall Farm, and South of Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire (SK 439948 313850). This archaeological work is in accordance with NPPF Section 12: Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment and addressed requirements of Leicestershire County Council as advisors to North-West Leicestershire District Council.

As shown by the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment record (HER), the application area lies some 330 metres the west of the medieval settlement core and conservation area of Ravenstone Village (**MLE 4831**). There are archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric through to the medieval and post-medieval periods, in the vicinity (LaCombe, 2016). There was therefore some potential for archaeological remains to be present within the application area.

Site Location, Details and Geology

The village of Ravenstone is located in in Ravenstone with Snibstone parish, east of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and west of Coalville. The application area is along the south side of the unclassified Ashby Road immediately to the west of Ravenstone village. The development area is directly east of Hall Farm and associated farm buildings. The land is currently pasture, and used for the grazing of a horse. Access onto the site is via a private drive to the farm.

The field is bounded on all sides with post and rail fence, hedgerows, an old brick wall, and conifers which separates the land from the recently built houses. The site is sub-rectangular in shape covering an area of *c.* 0.6 hectares and lies at a approximate height of *c.* 134m aOD gradually sloping down from the north at Ashby Road before levelling out to the south.

The Geological Survey of England & Wales, Sheet 155 shows the site to lie on Taporley Siltstone formation, siltstone, mudstone and sandstone. Sand and gravel is generally present to the south of the site (river terrace deposits).



Figure 1: Site Location

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Historical and Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment had been undertaken for the assessment area and within its wider location (LaCombe, 2016). The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that the application area is located just 330 metres to the west of the historic core of the village of Ravenstone (**MLE4831**). To the south of Ashby Road and pre-dominantly to the north-west of the site, archaeological finds through fieldwalking have been recovered including flint and pottery dating from the Neolithic/Bronze-age (**MLE 10572**), along with flints found just south of Ashby Road (**MLE10576**) and south of Heather lane (**MLE21468**). Air reconnaissance has revealed a cropmark in the form of probable Iron-Age enclosure and other crop-marks to the south-east and north-east (**MLE4813**) with two pit alignments aligned south-east to north-east and east to west (**MLE 16881, MIE17259**) to the north of the site. South of Ashby Road to the north-west of the site lies the deserted medieval village of Alton (**MLE 4814**) with large scatters of medieval and post-medieval pottery recorded during fieldwalking at Alton Grange Farm (**MLE 19760**). On the north side

of Ashby Road and opposite the development area lies the brick built 18th Ravenstone Hall which was originally built during the 17th century. The ground is noticeably higher on the north-east corner of the assessment area and aerial photography has recorded these linear earthworks to be garden features / landscaping associated with the hall (**MLE 4809**). Traces of ridge and furrow earthworks have also been noted. Open cast coal operations between 1982 and 1996 have taken place along this stretch of the Sence Valley covering 186 hectares (**MLE 20854**).

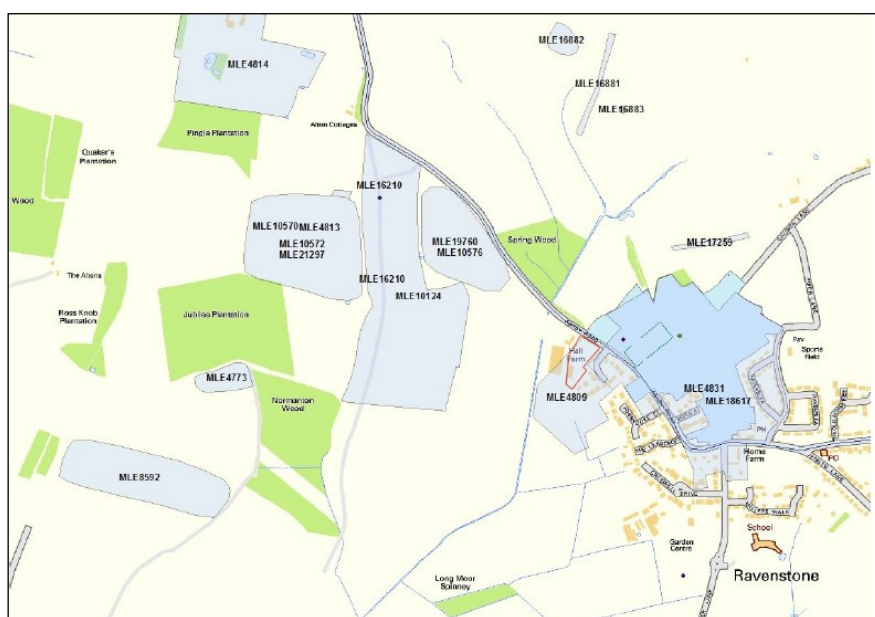


Figure 2: Map showing archaeological finds, sites recorded by HER. (Taken from LaCombe, 2016)

Archaeological Objectives

The main objectives of the evaluation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation is to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.

Trial trenching is an intrusive form of evaluation that will demonstrate the existence of earth-fast archaeological features that may exist within the area.



Figure 3: Location of application area

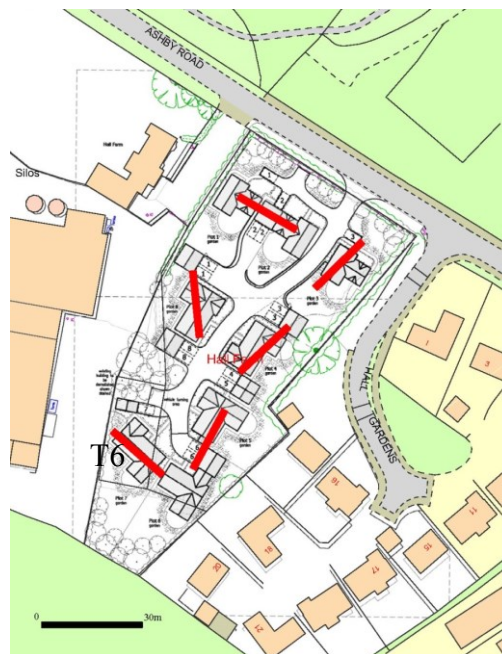


Figure 4: Proposed Trench locations (taken from the WSI)

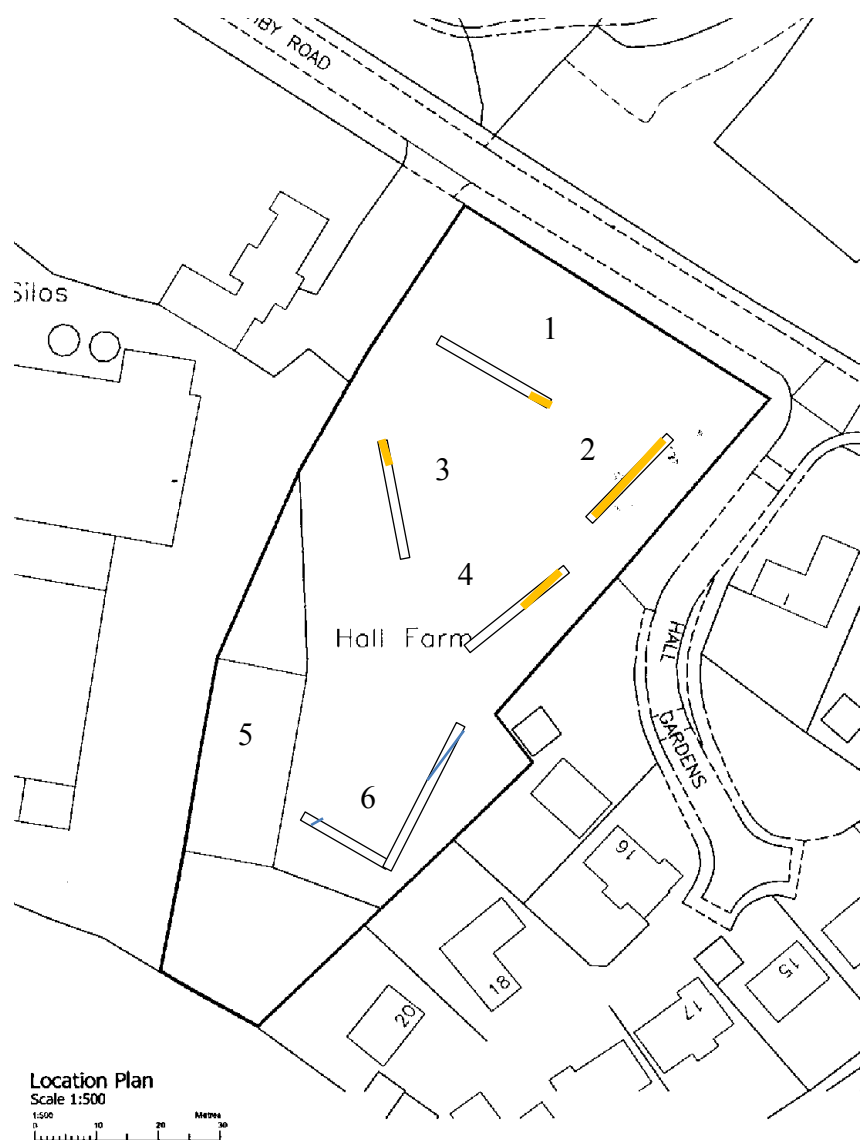


Figure 5 Plan of trenches. Furrows are shown in blue, make-up / disturbance deposits in orange

Methodology

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA) *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014b). It adhered to the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS 1997) and followed the *Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological work* (hereinafter WSI) prepared by ULAS (01.04.2016).

The WSI proposed six 20m x 1.60m trenches, equating to a total of 192 square metres, representing 3.2% of the 0.6 hectare area. As Trench 6 could not be excavated to a 20m length due to machinery being present other trenches were extended to provide an equivalent percentage sample.



Figure 6: Application area prior to evaluation looking north-east with Ravenstone Hall arrowed.

Results

The trenches were excavated by a JCB wheeled excavator with a 1.60m ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. After excavation and recording, the trenches were to be backfilled when the site dries out. All of the trenches were positioned as shown on figure 5 above. However due to proximity of the barn, heavy farm machinery, large agricultural trailers, and large piles of lime, trench 6 had to be shortened considerably by less than half the length. To make up the shortfall, trenches 4 and 5 were extended. The ground was very soft ground caused by the recent mild wet winter. Trench 2 could not be machine stripped down to the natural substratum in view of the presence of an electricity cable and consolidated make up deposits.

Trench 01

Orientation: North-west to south-east

Length: 20m

Width: 1.6m

Topsoil: Dark greyish brown, friable clayey-silt with occasional small sub-rounded stones, occasional brick fragments, and patches of red clay

Subsoil: Mid yellowish brown, friable clayey silt with moderate amounts of small rounded pebbles, brick fragments, and patches of red clay

Natural Substratum: Light mottled yellow soft sandy clay and red clay. Also light orange brown, loose silty-sand and gravel.

Interval	NW 0m	4m	8m	12m	16m	20m
Topsoil Depth	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30

Subsoil Depth	-	0.15	0.14	0.14	-	-
Top of natural substratum	0.30	0.45	0.44	0.44	0.30	0.30
Base of Trench	0.30	0.50	0.44	0.44	0.40	0.36

No archaeological features identified in Trench 1 with the exception of two north-east to south-west aligned furrows, one with a stone filled field drain. A clayey-silt deposit with moderate amounts of small rounded pebbles, brick fragments, and patches of red clay red clay was present at the east end of the trench.



Figure 7: Trench 1 looking south-east

Trench 02

Orientation: North-east to south-west

Length: 20m

Width: 1.60m

Topsoil: Mid greyish brown, with friable loam clayey-silt. Contains sparse small rounded pebbles and coal flecks.

Subsoil: Mid orangish brown, with soft silty-clay with moderate small rounded pebbles, occasional brick fragments and patches of red clay. Also extensive re-deposited natural substratum

Natural Substratum: light orange brown, loose silty-sand and gravel (visible at north end of trench)

Interval	NW 0m	4m	8m	12m	16m	20m
Topsoil Depth	0.30	0.30	0.28	0.35	0.20	0.25
Subsoil Depth	0.40+	0.50+	0.40+	0.15+	0.40+	0.35+
Top of natural substratum	0.70	-	-	-	-	-
Base of Trench	0.70	0.80	0.68	0.50	0.60	0.60



Figure 8: Trench 2, looking west



Figure 9: Trench 2, north-east to south-west section showing sequence of make up deposits possibly connected with landscaping. Looking south-east. 300mm scale.

Trench 2 was heavily disturbed with a mixture of re-deposited natural substratum, sandstone fragments, bricks and red clay. An electricity cable was also located crossing the trench so further excavation could not be undertaken. A hand dug section at the north-east end of the trench indicated that there was a sequence of four deposits overlying the natural substratum. At the base was a make-up deposit comprising mixed sandstone, pebble, red-clay and brick fragments *c.* 150mm thick. Above this was a dark grey silt clay deposit *c.* 120mm thick. A third deposit comprising light orange brown, loose silty-sand *c.* 200mm thick overlay this and was sealed by the greyish brown, clayey-silt topsoil *c.* 200mm thick.

Trench 03

Orientation: North-east to south-west

Length: 19m

Width: 1.6m

Topsoil: Dark yellowish brown, friable silty-clay-loam with occasional small rounded pebbles. Several roots with only turf layer evident with sharp clarity onto sub-soil.

Subsoil: Mid orange brown, friable clayey-silt with occasional small rounded pebbles, brick fragments, and occasional coal flecks

Natural Substratum: Light orange mottled yellow friable silty fine sand with manganese.

Interval	SW 0m	4m	8m	12m	16m	19m
Topsoil Depth	0.12	0.12	0.20	0.20	0.30	0.20
Subsoil Depth	0.21	0.21	0.20	0.20	-	0.20
Top of natural substratum	0.33	0.33	0.40	0.40	0.30	-
Base of Trench	0.33	0.33	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.50



Figure 10: Trench 3, looking north-east

No significant archaeological remains were identified although make up deposits comprising mid orange brown, friable clayey-silt with occasional small rounded pebbles, brick fragments, and occasional coal flecks were present cut into the natural substratum in the northern seven metres of the trench.

Trench 04

Orientation: North-north-west to South-south-east

Length: 25m

Width: 1.6m

Topsoil: Dark greyish brown, plasticky silty-clay with occasional small rounded pebbles, coal flecks and brick fragments.

Subsoil: Mid orange-brown, soft clayey-silt with sparse small rounded pebbles.

Natural Substratum: Same as trench 1

Interval	SW 0m	4m	8m	12m	16m	20m	25m
Topsoil Depth	0.30	0.40	0.40	0.30	0.40	0.20	0.45
Subsoil Depth	0.10	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20+	0.30+	-
Top of natural substratum	0.40	0.60	0.60	0.50	-	-	0.45
Base of Trench	0.50	0.60	0.60	0.50	0.60	0.50	0.45



Figure 5: Trench 4, looking north

No archaeological remains were identified. Some modern truncation with concentrated brick rubble was present in the northern 13 metres of the trench. A stone lined field drain crossed the trench width.

Trench 05

Orientation: North-east to south-west

Length: 27m

Width: 1.6m

Topsoil: Dark greyish brown, with friable loam. Occasional small rounded pebbles. Mostly just Turf at the south end.

Subsoil: Dark orangish brown, with friable silty clay loam. Occasional small rounded pebbles and brick fragments.

Natural Substratum: Same as trench 1.

Interval	SW 0m	4m	8m	12m	16m	20m	27m
Topsoil Depth	0.10	0.12	0.14	0.10	0.22	0.15	0.20
Subsoil Depth	0.30	0.46	0.36	0.40	0.30	0.20	0.25
Top of natural substratum	0.40	0.48	0.50	0.50	0.52	0.35	0.45
Base of Trench	0.46	0.52	0.50	0.50	0.52	0.36	0.50



Figure 6: Trench 5, looking south-west

Trench 5 was extended to make up for the shortened trench 7. Only north-east to south-west furrows were encountered crossing the trench diagonally. This continued into trench 6. No archaeological remains were identified.

Trench 06

Orientation: North-east to south-west

Length: 13m

Width: 1.6m

Topsoil: Dark yellowish brown, with friable silty clay-loam containing sparse small rounded pebbles .

Subsoil: Mid orange brown, with soft silty-clay with sparse small rounded pebbles and charcoal flecks.

Natural Substratum: Red brown silty-clay

Interval	E 0m	2m	4m	W 7m
Topsoil Depth	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Subsoil Depth	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.15
Top of natural substratum	0.50	0.50	-	0.35
Base of Trench	0.50	0.50	0.50 F	0.40



Figure 7: Trench 6, looking west



Figure 8: Trench 6, looking west

No archaeological remains were identified within trench 6 except shallow furrows (Figure 8).

Conclusion

The evaluation proved negative for artefactual evidence and significant archaeological deposits. However heavily truncated north-east to south-west furrows were evident in trenches 5 and 6 and make-up deposits were present in trenches 2 and 3. The southern half of the evaluation was generally undisturbed but waterlogged while the northern half, trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4 showed some evidence of disturbance (Figure 5). This was in the form of re-deposited natural substratum mixed up with sandstone and red clay with the latter showing in the topsoil & subsoil. While the natural substratum was visible in trenches 1, 3 and 4 beneath a single make up deposit, a section at the north end of Trench 2 showed a sequence of deposits. This showed a sequence of make-up deposits comprising re-deposited natural substratum overlying a dark grey silty-clay deposit, which may be a buried topsoil, which sealed sandstone fragments, bricks, red clay. No pottery was evident and the brick fragments, although appearing to be hand-made, were too small to identify as early narrow or later wider bricks. Make-up deposits were also visible in Trenches 1, 3 and 4. This disturbance may have been as a result of landscaping connected with construction or alterations to the 18th century Ravenstone Hall on the north side of Ashby Road. However there are buildings shown on the 1883, 1888 and 1903 OS maps in the plot immediately to the east which appear to have been demolished by 1930 and the rubble may have derived from their demolition in the early 20th century. The stone lined field drains could be connected with land improvements in the fields south of Ravenstone Hall.

Further to the south it appears the natural substratum is much less disturbed with more potential for visible archaeological remains but only shallow furrows were encountered within Trenches 5 and 6.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Mr David Land for his co-operation for allowing access onto his land and with supplying and driving the excavator. Also thanks due to Keller Construction Ltd for commissioning ULAS to undertake the project. The project was managed by Patrick Clay and the fieldwork was carried out by the author, also of ULAS.

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work through the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York.

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in a suitable regional archaeological journal in due course.

Archive

The archive for this project will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums with accession number X.A 52.2016. It will follow Brown 2008 and LMARS 2014

The archive consists of the following:

- 6 Trench recording sheets
- 1 index record sheet
- 1 Unbound copy of this report
- 1 CD digital report
- 1 Contact sheet of digital photographs
- 1 CD digital photographs

Bibliography

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James Patrick
ULAS
University of Leicester
University Road
Leicester LE1 7RH

Tel: 0116 252 2848
Fax: 0116 252 2614

Email:

ulas@le.ac.uk

14-04-2016

Appendix 1 OASIS Information

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-xxxx		
	Project Name	An archaeological field evaluation on land east of Hall Farm, & South of Ashby Road, Ravenstone Leicestershire NGR (SK 43994 31385)		
	Start/end dates of field work	12-13.04.2016		
	Previous/Future Work	None		
	Project Type	Excavation and Watching Brief		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Agricultural		
	Monument Type/Period	None/none		
	Significant Finds/Period	None		
	Development Type	Residential		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Pre-Planning		
	Planning Ref.	P.A.16/00020/7		
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	Hall Farm, Ashby Road, Ravenstone, Ravenstone and Snibstone, Leicester		
	Study Area	0.6 ha.		
	Site Coordinates	SK 43994 31385		
	Height OD	c 134m OD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Patrick clay		
	Project Director/Supervisor	James Patrick		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Developer : Keller Construction Ltd		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	NA	LCC	LCC
	ID (Acc. No.)		A52.2016	A52.2016
	Contents		Photos Survey data	Fieldwork records Field Notes
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An archaeological field evaluation on land east of Hall Farm, & South of Ashby Road, Ravenstone Leicestershire NGR (SK 43994 31385)		
	Author	James Patrick		
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	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		



ULAS Contact Details

Richard Buckley or Patrick Clay
University of Leicester Archaeological
Services (ULAS)
University of Leicester,
University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH

T: +44 (0)116 252 2848

F: +44 (0)116 252 2614

E: ulas@le.ac.uk

W: www.le.ac.uk/ulas



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