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Archaeological Services

An archaeological evaluation of land at 104 Main Street, Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire

NGR: SP 68036 94564

Mathew Morris



ULAS Report No. 2018-161

**An archaeological evaluation of land at 104 Main Street, Kibworth Harcourt,
Leicestershire**

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For: Mr and Mrs Hill

Planning ref.: 18/01035/FUL

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out on land at 104 Main Street, Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire (SP 68036 94564) by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on 24 September, 2018. Work was undertaken for Mr and Mrs Hill in order to establish the nature, extent, date and significance of any archaeological deposits which may be present, in order that an assessment may be made of the impact of any proposed development on the buried remains. The application area comprised a c.950 sq m area of garden on the south side of Main Street in close proximity to The Motte, a Scheduled Monument thought to represent the site of a former castle. One 10m by 1.5m trench was excavated across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. The evaluation has produced limited evidence for 19th- and 20th-century residential activity – namely artefacts and CBM in the garden's topsoil, and the burial of a pet. No other archaeological features or deposits were recorded. On the balance of evidence recorded during the investigation, it would appear that ground across the application area was extensively reworked in the recent past, possibly associated with pig farming. This had potentially removed and/or replaced subsoil and topsoil deposits. No evidence was found to suggest other archaeological activity was taking place in the area. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museums Service under the accession number X.A103.2018.

Introduction

In September 2018, University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching of land at 104 Main Street, Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire (SP 68036 94564 - Figure 1). The work was undertaken for Mr and Mrs Hill to establish the nature, extent, date, and significance of any archaeological deposits which might be present, in order that an assessment may be made of the impact of any proposed development on the buried remains.

In June 2018, a planning application was submitted to Harborough District Council for the 'removal of existing garage and erection of dwelling and associated works' (Application Ref. 18/01035/FUL) - planning approval was pending at the time of this work. Following advice from the Principal Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, as archaeological advisor to the local planning authority, a pre-determination programme of archaeological work was undertaken in order that the potential impact of the development on any archaeology could be assessed and an appropriate mitigation strategy implemented. This was in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (MHCLG 2018).

Archaeological work took place on 24 September, 2018. This document presents the results of the archaeological investigation.

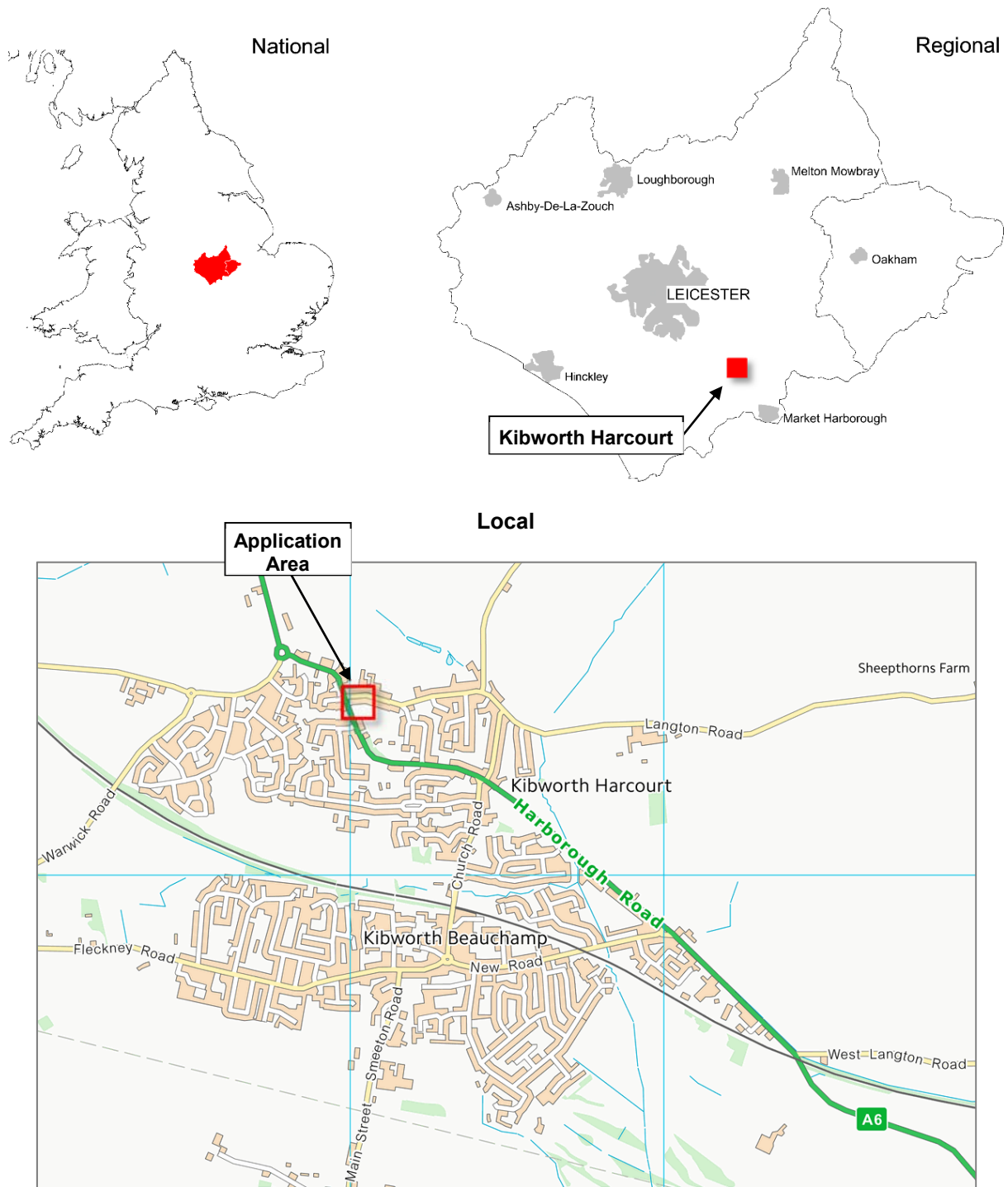


Figure 1: Site location with project area highlighted (contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2016).

Site Location, Geology and Topography

Kibworth Harcourt is a village in the Harborough District in south-east Leicestershire, approximately 14km south-east of Leicester and 9km north-west of Market Harborough. The application area lies south of Main Street, to the rear of No. 104, and 30m east of Leicester Road (A6) at SP 68036 94564 (Figure 1). The area comprises a broadly L-shaped plot covering around 950 sq m. At the time of work the site was garden (Figure 2 & Figure 3).

The British Geological Survey shows that the underlying geology is likely to consist of superficial deposits of mid Pleistocene period diamicton overlying bedrock deposits of Triassic period mudstone of the Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS Open Geoscience). The application area lies on relatively flat ground at approximately 126m aOD, with ground in the wider setting dropping down gently from north-west to south-east.



Figure 2: Looking south-east across the application area before work commenced. The Motte can be seen as rising ground behind the fence at the back of the garden.



Figure 3: Looking north across the application area before work commenced. No. 104 Main Street can be seen at the back of the view.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) notes that the site lies within the medieval and post-medieval historic settlement core of Kibworth Harcourt (HER ref.: MLE16877), adjacent to The Motte (MLE1772), a nationally important designated heritage asset and Scheduled Monument (NHLE ref.: 1012568), thought to represent the site of a former castle. Recent archaeological investigation in the rear garden of an adjacent property to the west (112 Main Street) has also identified the presence of archaeological remains, including Roman, early and later medieval pottery (MLE19264, 19275, 19943 & 19958). A small quantity of medieval pottery was also found at 80 Main Street (MLE19959) to the east.

Historic mapping dating back to the early 17th century shows some development along the southern side of Main Street, although not within the application area itself. First evidence of development of the frontage at 104 Main Street can be seen on Thomas Eagle's 1781 map of the village, whilst the present property is visible on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. These maps show that land to the rear of the frontage has been field or garden for at least 400 years.

Archaeological Objectives

The principle aims of the archaeological excavation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of archaeological deposits
- To establish the character, extent, and date range of any archaeological deposits, artefacts and ecofacts to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To appropriately record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To establish the relationship between any remains found and the surrounding contemporary landscape.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

The results of the investigation were considered in light of the East Midlands Research Agenda (Cooper 2006) and updated Agenda and Strategy (Knight *et al* 2012), particularly:

The Early Medieval period (Vince 2006, Knight *et al* 2012)

- Rural settlement patterns (Knight *et al* 2012, 6.4)
 - 6.4.3 Can spatial and temporal variations in the morphology, functions and status of settlements be defined more precisely?
 - 6.4.4 What factors may underlie the progression from dispersed to nucleated settlement and the growth of settlement hierarchies?

The Medieval period (Lewis 2006, Knight *et al* 2012)

- Rural settlement (Knight *et al* 2012, 7.2)
 - 7.2.1 How can we elucidate further the development of nucleated villages, and in particular the contribution of the Danelaw to changes in village morphology?
- Castles, military sites and country houses (Knight *et al* 2012, 7.4)
 - 7.4.2 What was the date and function of currently undated minor motte and bailey castles?
- The agrarian landscape and food-producing economy (Knight *et al* 2012, 7.7)

- 7.7.1 Can we shed further light upon the origins and development of the open-field system and its impact upon agricultural practices?
- 7.7.4 What can environmental remains teach us about diet and living conditions in urban, rural and coastal communities?

The research aims were updated as work progressed and new information came to light.



Figure 4: Looking south-west across the application area, with the mechanical digger working at Trench 1.

Methodology

During the evaluation, soil was removed in level spits under continuous archaeological supervision down to the uppermost archaeological deposits or the natural substratum, depending on which was reached first. This was carried out with a 1.5 ton mini-360° mechanical digger using a 0.9m wide toothless ditching bucket (Figure 4).

The trench, open areas, exposed sections, and spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and artefacts. Any archaeological features discovered would be hand cleaned, planned, photographed and sample excavated as appropriate. Field notes were recorded on pro-forma ULAS trench recording forms whilst stratigraphic units were to be given a unique context number and recorded on pro forma ULAS context sheets. Trench and feature plans/sections were drawn at appropriate scales and tied into the National Grid using appropriate methods. A photographic record of the excavation was prepared, illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. Colour digital photographs were taken throughout the excavation. The photographic record also included ‘working shots’ to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

All work followed the a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI - Brown 2018), approved by the Principal Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Cifa) *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance*

for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2014b).

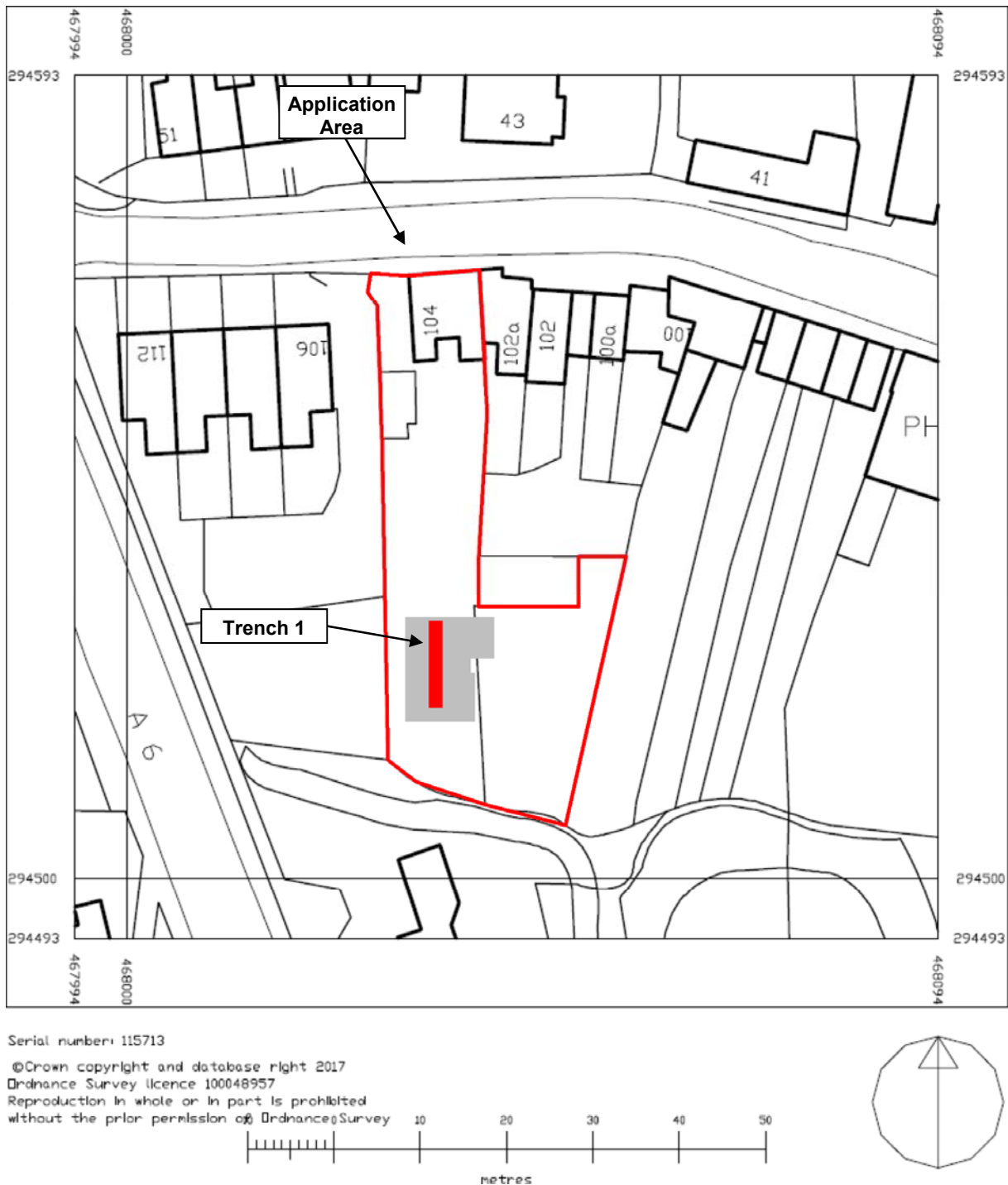


Figure 5: Plan of the application area showing trench location (red) and proposed dwelling (grey). Background map provided by client.

Results

At the direction of the Principal Archaeologist, the WSI (Brown 2018) provided for the investigation of one 10m by 1.6m trench (totalling 16 sq m) across the footprint of the proposed new dwelling (Figure 5).



Figure 6: looking south across Trench 1.

Trench 1

Length (m)	Width (m)		Area (sq m)	Min. depth (m)		Max. depth (m)
10	1.5		15	0.32		0.44
Interval (m) from N	0	2	4	6	8	10 to S
Ground (m aOD)	125.74	-	-	-	-	125.59
Topsoil depth	0.34	0.36	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.28
Subsoil depth	0.10	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
Top of natural substratum	0.44	0.44	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.32
Base of trench	0.44	0.44	0.36	0.40	0.40	0.32

Trench 1 was positioned in the southern half of the application area, around 40m south of Main Street and 5.5m east of the area’s western boundary (Figure 5). It was broadly orientated north to south. The mechanical digger removed between 0.28m and 0.34m of turf and loose dark greyish brown clayey silt topsoil and 40mm to 0.1m of firm yellowish grey silty clay subsoil to reveal natural substratum of greyish yellow sandy clay between 0.32m and 0.44m below present ground level.

The topsoil contained abundant pebbles and charcoal, with small quantities of ceramic building material (CBM), 19th and 20th century pottery (including Pancheon ware, stoneware and china), and several plastic artefacts (a cigarette lighter and two small plastic toy balls). At least one plastic artefact was found on the interface with the subsoil at least 0.3m below ground level. Subsoil contained some pebbles and charcoal but no human-made artefacts.

The interface between the natural substratum and subsoil was undulating, with patches of subsoil and topsoil impressed up to 20mm into the top of the sandy clay. This disturbance appeared natural in origin, probably a result of bioturbation.

Two small circular features were noted cutting into the natural at the northern end of the trench. Both were modern, filled with topsoil; one contained the skeletal remains of a pet burial, the other was possibly a post-hole.

Discussion

Overall, the results of the archaeological investigation were negative, aside for activity associated with the area's present use as a garden (e.g. the pet burial). Comments from the client and their contractor indicated that this part of the application area had previously been a pig farm, and that contaminated ground and slurry had been removed and new topsoil imported when farming finished. The loose topsoil and predominately absent subsoil in Trench 1 are consistent with this activity. Therefore, whilst artefacts from the topsoil could relate to early modern activity associated with 104 Main Street, it is equally likely that they have been redeposited from an unknown location unrelated to the property. Evidence of widespread bioturbation across the surface of the natural substratum could also be consistent with pigs rooting in the soil.

Conclusion

The evaluation has produced limited evidence for 19th- and 20th-century residential activity – namely artefacts and CBM in the garden's topsoil, and the burial of a pet. No other archaeological features or deposits were recorded. On the balance of evidence recorded during the investigation, it would appear that ground across the application area was extensively reworked in the recent past, possibly associated with pig farming. This had potentially removed and/or replaced subsoil and topsoil deposits. No evidence was found to suggest other archaeological activity was taking place in the area.

Archive

The site archive consists of 1 trench record sheets, 7 digital photographs and a photo index. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museums Service under the accession number X.A103.2018.

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) at the University of York (see Table 1).

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in an appropriate local archaeological journal in due course.

Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to extend its thanks to our client, Mr and Mrs Hill and to their contractor for their assistance and co-operation throughout the project; and also to Richard Clark, Principal Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, for his advice and support. Mathew Morris completed the fieldwork and this report. The project was managed for ULAS by John Thomas.

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Version 1: 25-09-2018

Table 1: Summary of OASIS information

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-329420		
	Project Name	Evaluation of land at 104 Main Street, Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire		
	Start/end dates of field work	24/09/2018		
	Previous/Future Work	none / not known		
	Project Type	Evaluation by trial trenching		
	Site Status	None		
	Current Land Use	Garden		
	Monument Type/Period	None / none		
	Significant Finds/Period	None / none		
	Development Type	Rural residential		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Between deposition of an application and determination		
	Planning Ref.	18/01035/FUL		
PROJECT LOCATION	Site Address/Postcode	104 Main Street, Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire		
	Study Area	950 sq m		
	Site Coordinates	SP 68036 94564		
	Height OD	126m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body		
	Project Design Originator	John Thomas		
	Project Manager	John Thomas		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Mathew Morris		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Developer		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	-	Leics. Mus. Service	Leics. Mus. Service
	ID (Acc. No.)	-	X.A103.2018	X.A103.2018
	Contents	-	Photos Report	Trench records Photo index Report
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Title	An archaeological evaluation of land at 104 Main Street, Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire (SP 68036 94564)		
	Author	Morris, M.		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2018-161		
	Date	2018		
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