



Land at 27 Commercial Road London E1 1LD

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Planning Ref: PA/13/02338
MoL Site Code: CIL 16
Ref: 114490.02
December 2016



**Land at 27 Commercial Road
London
E1 1LD**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared for:
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December 2016

MoL Site Code: CIL 16
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Quality Assurance

Project Code	114490	Accession Code	CIL 16	Client Ref.	
Planning Application Ref.	PA/13/02338	Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)	534084, 181353		

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Front Cover: Working shot of Site from the east



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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Gardiner & Theobald LLP to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at 27 Commercial Road, London, E1 1LD. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 534084, 181353.

The proposed development comprised the demolition of the previous buildings and the construction of a 19/21 storey hotel comprising 269 bedrooms and associated bar and restaurant facilities, with one (on site) disabled parking space, 24 cycle parking spaces at basement and ground level and a service/drop off bay off Whitechurch Lane.

The watching brief entailed the monitoring of ground level reduction for the new basement. The watching brief took place the 26th September 2016 and the 18th October 2016.

Monitoring of the works revealed a sequence of significant made ground overlying natural geology. It was apparent that the area had been significantly truncated in the past by quarrying of the natural sands and gravels in this area and the construction of the basements associated with the previous buildings that occupied the Site. The confined deposit of 19th/20th century date in the south west of the Site is suggestive of the previous quarry pits likely being used for rubbish dumping prior to the development of the Site and wider area for residential and commercial purposes. Any remaining Brickearth, which may have contained or sealed archaeological features/remains, was removed during the quarrying and development activities.



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Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Gardiner & Theobald LLP and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Jonathan Bowler in this regard. Thanks are also extended to John Gould, Archaeological Officer for Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for his input into the project.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Emilia Seredynska, Lisa McCaig and Andrew Souter. The report was compiled by Andrew Souter, with illustrations prepared by Andrew Souter and Jo Condliffe. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Rob De'Athe.



Land at 27 Commercial Road London E1 1LD

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology has been commissioned by Gardiner & Theobald LLP (the Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at 27 Commercial Road, London, E1 1LD (hereafter 'the Site', **Figure 1**), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 534084, 181353.

1.1.2 The development comprised the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of a 19/21 storey hotel comprising 269 bedrooms and associated bar and restaurant facilities, with one disabled parking space (on site), 24 cycle parking spaces at basement and ground level and a service/drop off bay off Whitechurch Lane.

1.1.3 A watching brief was required to assess the potential of the proposed works to disturb remains of archaeological significance as set out in the following paragraph (**Condition 10**) of the planning application reference: **PA/13/02338**:

'a) No development or demolition shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority;

b) No development or demolition shall take place other than that which has been approved in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation as above; and

c) The development shall not be occupied until the Written Scheme of Investigation and post excavation assessment have been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (as approved) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and the archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: The development of the site is likely to damage heritage assets of archaeological interest that may survive in the Area. These measures should be taken to ensure the preservation of any finds or remains, in situ or by record, and subsequent analysis and dissemination of the results. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the NPPF 2011, policy SP10 of the Core Strategy (2010), and policy DM27 of the Managing Development Document (2013).

The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme pursuant to this condition. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.'

1.1.4 The archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2015), which was agreed in advance of the fieldwork with the Archaeological Officer at the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLASS),



who provides an advisory service to the Local Planning Authority (LPA). All works were carried out in accordance with the relevant standards and guidance issued by The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2014b), with which Wessex Archaeology is a Registered Archaeological Organisation.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is located in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and occupies the eastern extent of a triangular plot of land adjacent to London Bridge Station. The Site is currently occupied by two late 19th century three storey buildings, fronting Commercial Road, two 19th century two storey buildings and a 1920-1930 two storey building fronting Whitechurch Lane.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology is mapped as Brickearth overlying river deposited sand and gravel (British Geological Survey).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been produced by Sutton Archaeological Services (2012). The summary of the assessment has been provided below;

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Sutton Archaeological Services 2012)

- 2.1.2 The historical and cartographic evidence suggest that the area of the Site was margin land, marsh or meadowland from at least the Saxon period, if not before, until the 17th century. It would have been used for animal grazing in the summer months and lain fallow in the remaining period and is unlikely to have suffered from ploughing. The Site was developed and re-developed from the 18th century to the 19th and 20th centuries, so within the footprint of these buildings any archaeology would have suffered extensive damage. The yard area to the north of 29 Whitechurch Lane was once occupied by a 19th century building. Although the building has now gone, it is most likely that it also had a large basement and suffered extensive damage. The surrounding area also contained numerous quarry pits, showing that the area to the east of London was extensively quarried. If any quarry pits were on Site, they would have also destroyed any archaeology present.
- 2.1.3 The proposed development Site is situated to the east of Roman *Londinium* on the edge of the Eastern Cemetery and to the south of The Great Road, a Roman road running between the medieval Aldgate and Chelmsford which follows the route of the current A11 Whitechapel Road and Whitechapel High Street. Roman cemeteries have been recorded around the proposed Site within the Minories to the west, cable Street to the south, Canon Street Road to the east and Whitechurch Road to the north and comprise both cremation and inhumations with grave goods, caskets and in one case an engraved tombstone. More recently a stone sculpture of a Roman eagle, believed to have adorned a tomb or mausoleum, was discovered to the south of Aldgate station. Taking this into consideration it is evident that Roman remains are present within the surrounding area and that they may extend into the proposed development Site.
- 2.1.4 The survival of such remains, should they be present, would depend on the degree of truncation caused during later development on the Site.



3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The principal aim of the archaeological work at the Site was to record the location, extent, date, nature, character and significance of any archaeological remains that may exist on the Site.
- 3.1.2 The general aims of the archaeological fieldwork programme was to:
- *provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains and to investigate and record all archaeological features revealed during excavation and groundwork;*
 - *establish a broad phased plan of the archaeology revealed during the ground works;*
 - *investigate the function of any structural remains and the activities taking place within and close to the Site; and*
 - *to inform and provide information for any future mitigation for the Site in compliance with the planning condition.*

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.2.1 The archaeological work and the preparation of this report were undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (WA 2015) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2014b).
- 3.2.2 The watching brief comprised the archaeological monitoring of ground reduction works for the new basement, removal of previous concrete plinths and brick basement retaining walls and the probing of the area for below ground obstructions.

3.3 Recording

- 3.3.1 Any deposits encountered during the watching brief were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system.
- 3.3.2 All written, drawn and photographic records were compiled in accordance with the Wessex Archaeology Fieldwork Recording Manual.
- 3.3.3 Photographs were taken as appropriate, providing a record of exposed deposits along with images of the overall excavation and the Site as a whole. The photographic record is comprised of digital photographic images. A register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive.

3.4 Health and Safety

- 3.4.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*, the *Management of Health and Safety Regulations (1992)* and *Health and Safety in Field*



Archaeology (1997), and all other relevant health and safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

- 3.4.2 A Health and Safety Risk Assessment was carried out by Wessex Archaeology (2016), which was read and understood by all staff attending the Site before groundwork commenced.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section presents the results of the archaeological watching brief. Detailed descriptions of the contexts recorded are included in Appendix 1. **Figure 1** identifies the locations of the areas within the watching brief.

4.2 Monitoring of Groundworks - Results

- 4.2.1 The monitored groundworks primarily consisted of ground level reduction to approximately 4.5m below existing ground level (bgl), as part of this process several retaining walls for previous basements and concrete pads were removed along with a number of large metal support struts (**Plate 1**). After reaching the appropriate level the ground was probed for below ground obstructions using a mechanical excavator (**Plate 2**). The work was conducted in sections with completed areas excavated and backfilled due to the limited space available on Site (**Plate 3**). Work was to cease if archaeological features/deposits were identified to allow sufficient time to excavate and record the features if safe to do so.

- 4.2.2 The monitored works revealed a stratigraphic model comprising multiple layers of made ground associated with the previous basements, and the backfilling of quarry pits overlaying natural sands. A small confined layer of a 19th/20th century deposit was recorded in the south west corner of the Site (**Plate 4**).

- 4.2.3 The removal of multiple foundation pads and retaining walls was monitored, with no archaeologically significant material observed (**Plates 5 & 6**). The removal of the western retaining wall revealed the retaining wall for the neighbouring extant fire station basement (**Plates 7 & 8**).

4.3 Discussion

- 4.3.1 Monitoring of the works revealed a sequence of significant made ground overlying natural geology. It was apparent that the area had been significantly truncated in the past by quarrying of the natural sands and gravels in this area and the construction of the basements associated with the previous buildings that occupied the Site. The confined deposit of 19th/20th century date in the south west of the Site is suggestive of the previous quarry pits likely being used for rubbish dumping prior to the development of the Site and wider area for residential and commercial purposes. Any remaining Brickearth, which may have contained or sealed archaeological features/remains, was removed during the quarrying and development activities.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 The programme of archaeological work has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the specification. The archaeological potential has been tested and has revealed extensive truncation either from previous building works or from earlier quarrying of the Site and within the wider vicinity. It is considered that previous activity

within the monitored area has truncated any archaeological features or deposits that may have been present at the Site.

6 STORAGE AND CURATION

6.1 Museum

6.1.1 The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's *Guidelines for Archive Preparation* and in accordance with *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage* (Walker 1990) and following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995). On completion of the project, the archive will be deposited with the appropriate museum.

6.2 Preparation of Archive

6.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by an appropriate Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014a; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

6.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the Site code **114490**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

- 1 file/document cases of paper records & A4 graphics;

6.3 Copyright

6.3.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The recipient museum, however, will be granted an exclusive license for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profit making, and conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003*.

6.4 Discard Policy

6.4.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.

6.4.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2011).

6.5 Security Copy

6.5.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

6.5.2 The digital records will be submitted to the local Historic Environment Record, with a copy retained in the Wessex Archaeology security-copied and backed-up digital archive storage facility, under its designated Wessex Archaeology project code 114490.



References

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7 APPENDICIES

7.1 Appendix 1: Oasis Form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-269866

Project details

Project name	27 Commercial Road
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Gardiner and Theobald LLP to conduct an archaeological watching brief on land at 27 Commercial Road, London, E1 1LD, centred on National Grid Reference 534084, 181353. The development consisted of the demolition of previous buildings and the construction of a 19/21 storey hotel with associated facilities. A small 19th/20th century rubbish layer and 20th century basement retaining walls were recorded.
Project dates	Start: 26-09-2016 End: 18-10-2016
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	114490 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	PA/13/02338 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	CMC15 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS STEPNEY 27 Commercial Road
Postcode	E1 1LD
Study area	485 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 534084 181353 50.941647714208 0.183833874981 50 56 29 N 000 11 01 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Rob De'Athe



Project supervisor	Emelia Seredynska
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Gardiner & Theobald LLP

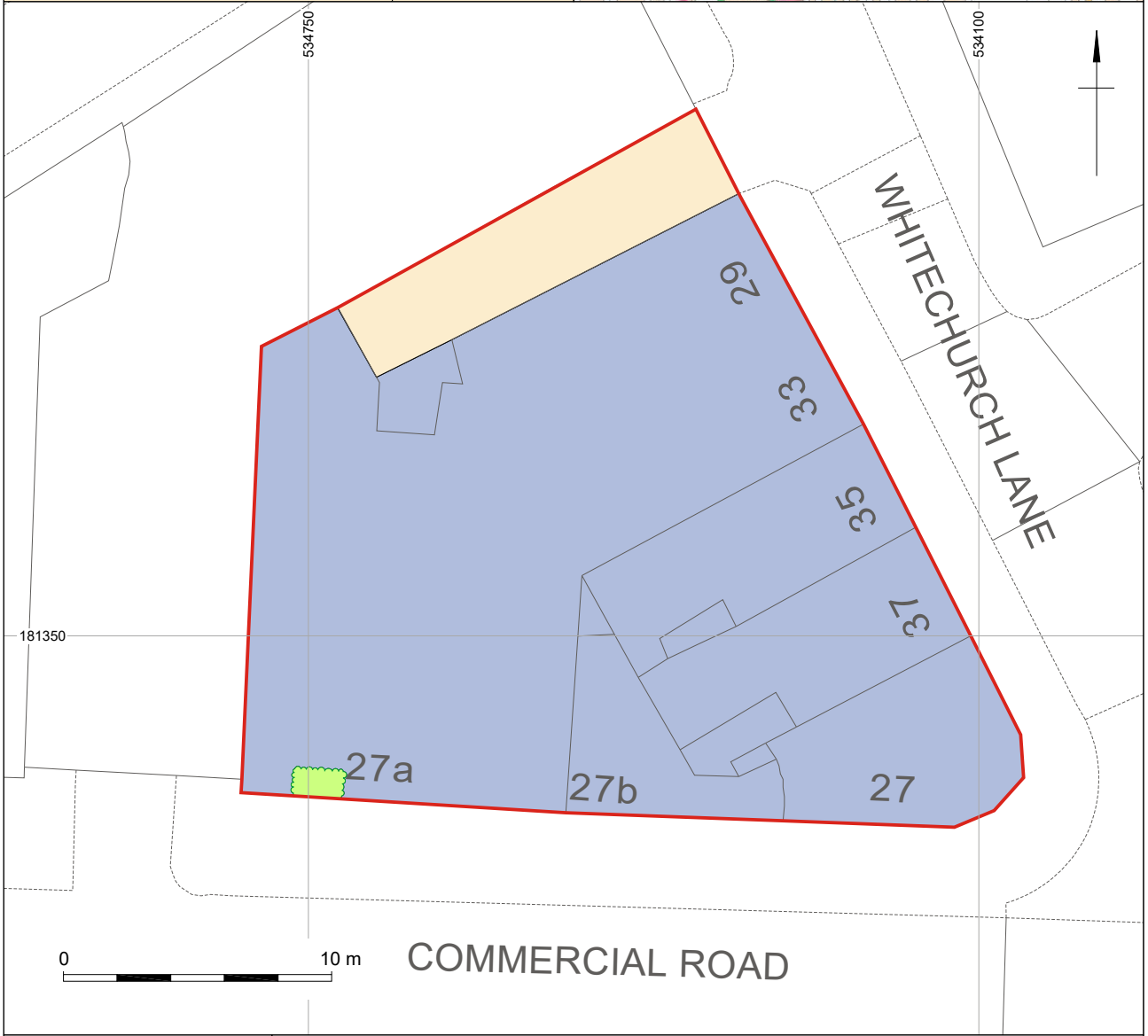
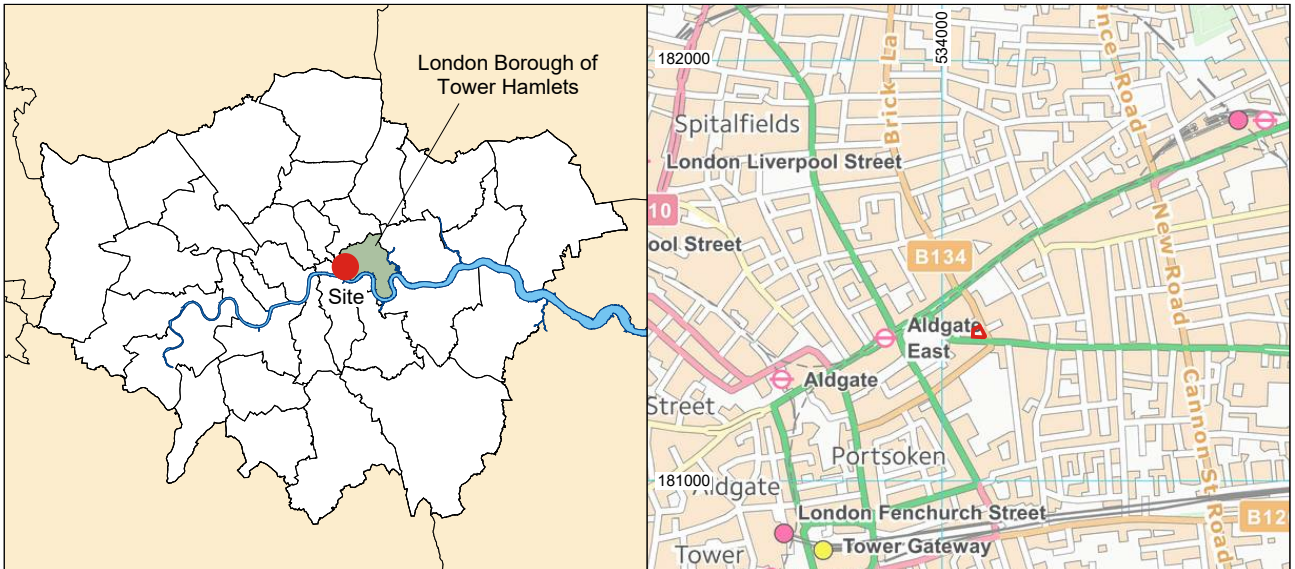
Project archives


Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Diary", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Report", "Unpublished Text", "Unspecified Archive"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land at 27 Commercial Road, London, E1 1LD: Archaeological Watching Brief
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Author(s)/Editor(s)	De'Athe, R
Other bibliographic details	114490.02
Date	2016
Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Maidstone
Description	Report detailing the results of an archaeological watching brief. Grey Literature report

Entered by	Andrew Souter (a.souter@wessexarch.co.uk)
Entered on	28 November 2016



- Site boundary
 - Concrete path with compound
 - Made ground
 - Rubbish deposit
- 

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Site location and results

Figure 1



Plate 1: Working shot along the edge of Whitechurch Lane from the north east



Plate 2: Working shot from the western wall


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Plate 3: Backfilling of south east corner of the Site after probing



Plate 4: Rubbish layer in the south west corner of the Site from the north


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Plate 5: Working shot, removal of concrete floor



Plate 6: Working shot, removal of concrete slab



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Plate 7: Working shot, removal of western retaining wall



Plate 8: Retaining wall for neighbouring fire station

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