

**SMOKING BALCONY
AT CLUB 2000 BINGO
ASPECTS LEISURE CENTRE
BEDFORD**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,
RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the project design. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

Fieldwork was carried out by Iain Leslie (Assistant Archaeological Supervisor). This report has been prepared by James Newbould (Project Officer) and checked by Jeremy Oetgen (Project Manager). Joan Lightning (CAD Technician) produced the figures.

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Key Terms

Throughout this report, the following terms or abbreviations are used:

AA	Archaeological Advisor [to the Local Planning Authority]
Client	Club 2000 Bingo at Aspects Park
IAM	Inspector of Ancient Monuments [English Heritage]
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
HER	Historic Environment Record
SMC	Scheduled Monument Consent



Non-Technical Summary

Club2000 Bingo Ltd has obtained planning consent (08/3054/FUL) for a first-floor covered smoking balcony, attached to an existing building within Aspects Leisure Park, Newnham Avenue, Bedford. The site is henceforth referred to as the Development Area.

The Development Area was known to have high archaeological potential as it lay within the site of the medieval Newnham Priory and partly within the scheduled area. The planning consent accordingly contained a condition requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation as a consequence of the development. Scheduled monument consent was also obtained in respect of the development affecting the scheduled area.

The ground-works included the excavation of six 1m by 1m foundation trenches up to 1.4m deep. Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the monitoring of these works and prepare a report (this document) on the results.

Monitoring revealed buried topsoil horizons representing a former land surface. One of these was overlain by a demolition spread containing Tudor brick, possibly derived from demolition of post-medieval buildings known to have existed on the priory site following the Dissolution. Its depth was broadly comparable to the depth of the archaeological deposits encountered during archaeological excavations in advance of the construction of the adjacent Bingo Hall (Albion Archaeology 2006 and in prep.). The date of the probable demolition of the Tudor structure cannot be ascertained.

The results of the investigation have demonstrated that, despite the impact of modern buildings and services, archaeological deposits have survived within the development area. Given the depth and extent of the remains encountered in this and previous investigations, there is good potential for the survival of further archaeological deposits within and adjacent to the footprints of the existing buildings.

No further analysis of the results of the work on the smoking balcony is necessary, but the relevant information from this investigation will be fed into the current report of the 2006 excavations (Albion Archaeology in prep.). The project records will also be integrated and archived along with those from the earlier project.

The project archive, comprising documentary records, will be deposited with Bedford Museum (BEDFM 2003/347).



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Background*

Club2000 Bingo Ltd has obtained planning consent (08/3054/FUL) for a first-floor covered balcony, attached to an existing building at Aspects Leisure Park, Newnham Avenue, Bedford (Figure 1). The site is henceforth referred to as the Development Area.

The Development Area was known to have high archaeological potential as it lay within the site of the medieval Newnham Priory. A condition was therefore attached to the planning permission requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation as a consequence of the development. The Local Planning Authority's Archaeological Advisor (AA) issued a Brief outlining the scope of the programme (BCC 2009). A Project Design for the work (Albion Archaeology 2009) was prepared in accordance with the brief and was approved by the AA prior to commencement of fieldwork.

The north-eastern corner of the Development Area lay within the boundary of Newnham Priory scheduled ancient monument (Bedfordshire monument no. 79) and for that reason an scheduled monument consent (SMC) was obtained from the Department for Culture Media and Sport. A condition of SMC also required implementation of the programme of archaeological work set out in the Project Design.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the monitoring of these ground-works for the balcony and prepare a report (this document) on the results.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

Aspects Leisure Centre lies *c.* 1.5km east of the centre of Bedford, outside the historic core of the town (Figure 1). The site is bounded by the River Great Ouse and the New Cut watercourse to the south, Newnham Avenue to the west, Barkers Lane to the north and a triangular area of waste ground to the east. The western half of the site is occupied by the buildings of the leisure centre complex, while the eastern half comprises a public car park.

The proposed smoking balcony is to be constructed at the eastern end of the building which houses the Club2000 Bingo hall (NGR: TL 06571 49408) and will occupy an existing embayment between the electricity substation and an extension constructed in 2007 (Figure 2). The area covered by the proposed balcony measures approximately 8m by 6.4m.

The geology of the Great Ouse Valley in Bedfordshire generally comprises Oxford clay and boulder clay overlain by river terrace gravels and alluvium.



1.3 Archaeological Background

The Development Area lies *c.* 100m to the west of the site of a scheduled ancient monument (Bedfordshire monument no. 79), the medieval Newnham Priory (HER297). Also part of the SAM, to the immediate east of the Development Area are the standing remains of the walls of a subsequent Tudor mansion and gardens. A detailed account of the history of the Newnham Priory site is given in an archaeological deposit survey (BCAS 1999).

Excavations in 2006-2007, in advance of the construction of the Bingo Hall, demonstrated that the area to the immediate north of the Development Area contained archaeological remains dating from the medieval to post-medieval periods. These consisted of a lower cobbled surface possibly relating to Newnham Priory and a later cobbled surface and buildings relating to the Tudor Mansion (Figure 2). These investigations included the area in which Trenches 3 and 4 are located (Figure 2).



2. METHODOLOGY

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken between 2nd and 3rd September 2009. During this period, all construction ground-works requiring monitoring were completed.

The ground-works comprised the excavation of six 1m by 1m foundation trenches that were up to 1.4m deep. All trenches were excavated by a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket (Figure 2).

The archaeological works adhered to the standards and field methods set out in the Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2009).

Throughout the project, the standards set out in the IfA's *Code of Conduct and Standards and Guidance* documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, 2008) were followed.

The project archive, comprising documentary records, will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession code BEDFM 2003/347).



3. RESULTS OF THE FIELDWORK

3.1 Introduction

All recorded deposits were issued with unique context numbers, written in brackets where referred to below (***)).

This section should be viewed in conjunction with Figure 2. Detailed information on all the deposits referred to below can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2 Deposits

In all trenches, deposits comprised a topsoil (400) overlying a sequence of modern make-up layers consisting of gravel, hardcore and re-worked topsoil or alluvium containing modern ceramic building materials (402, 405-407). The existing ground surface lay at *c.* 25.75m OD. These were probably very recent deposits laid down to level up after the successive phases of construction of the existing buildings.

A buried topsoil deposit (402) was observed in foundation Trench 1, 1.2m below current ground level (*c.* 24.5m OD). A second buried topsoil horizon (409) was also identified at *c.* 24.74m OD in Trench 6. It was overlain by a deposit containing post-medieval bricks of the same type as those used to construct the upstanding Tudor wall, *c.* 5m to the east (Figure 2). It is likely that this deposit derived from the demolition or collapse of this structure or other Tudor buildings that may have stood in the vicinity. This would suggest that the buried topsoil indicates the height of the ground surface that was contemporary with the building.

Beneath these deposits, the undisturbed stratum comprised alluvium (403) associated with the river Great Ouse. Alluvium was encountered in Trenches 1, 5 and 6 (Figure 2) at a depth of between 1.1m and 1.35m below existing ground level (*c.* 24.35-24.6m OD). No archaeological features or artefacts were present within the alluvium. Trenches 2, 3 and 4 were excavated down to modern concrete slabs associated with the existing buildings.

3.3 Significance of the Results and Potential for Analysis

Deposits (402) and (409) indicate the former ground surface level prior to creation of demolition spread (408). The surface's depth (*c.* 25.1m OD to the top of (408)) is broadly comparable to the depth of the archaeological deposits encountered during excavations in advance of the construction of the Bingo Hall (Albion Archaeology 2006) and is within the range 25.00-25.33m OD predicted by the archaeological deposit survey (BCAS 1999).

The date of the probable demolition of the Tudor structure cannot be ascertained.

The results of the investigation have demonstrated that, despite the impact of modern buildings and services, archaeological deposits have survived within the development area. Given the depth and extent of the remains encountered



in this and previous investigations, there is good potential for the survival of further archaeological deposits within and adjacent to the footprints of the existing buildings.

No further analysis of the results of the work on the smoking balcony is necessary, but the relevant information from this investigation will be fed into the current report of the 2006 excavations (Albion Archaeology in prep.). The project records will also be integrated and archived along with those from the earlier project.



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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5. APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT SUMMARY



Area: 4
Extent (ha): 0.005
OS Co-ordinates: TL0657149408
Description: Trenches excavated prior to the construction of stanchions for the proposed smoking balcony, undertaken by contractors under archaeological supervision

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
400	Topsoil	Friable dark brown grey clay silt frequent small ceramic building material, frequent small stones. Thickness 0.35m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
401	Make up layer	Compact mid brown grey silty rubble . Thickness 0.90m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
402	Buried topsoil	Firm dark grey silt occasional small stones. Thickness 0.15m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
403	Alluvium	Firm mid grey brown silt . Thickness >0.20m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
404	Make up layer	Compact mid pink hardcore . Thickness 1.30m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
405	Make up layer	Firm dark brown grey silt frequent small-medium ceramic building material, frequent small stones. Thickness >0.05m	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
406	Make up layer	Firm dark brown grey clay silt frequent small-medium ceramic building material, frequent small-medium stones. Thickness 0.89m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
407	Make up layer	Firm dark brown grey clay silt frequent small-medium ceramic building material, frequent small-medium stones. Thickness 0.30m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
408	Demolition layer	Loose mid orange rubble frequent small-large ceramic building material. Thickness 0.36m, brick of Tudor date	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
409	Buried topsoil	Friable mid brown grey silt frequent small-medium ceramic building material, frequent small-medium stones. Thickness 0.09m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

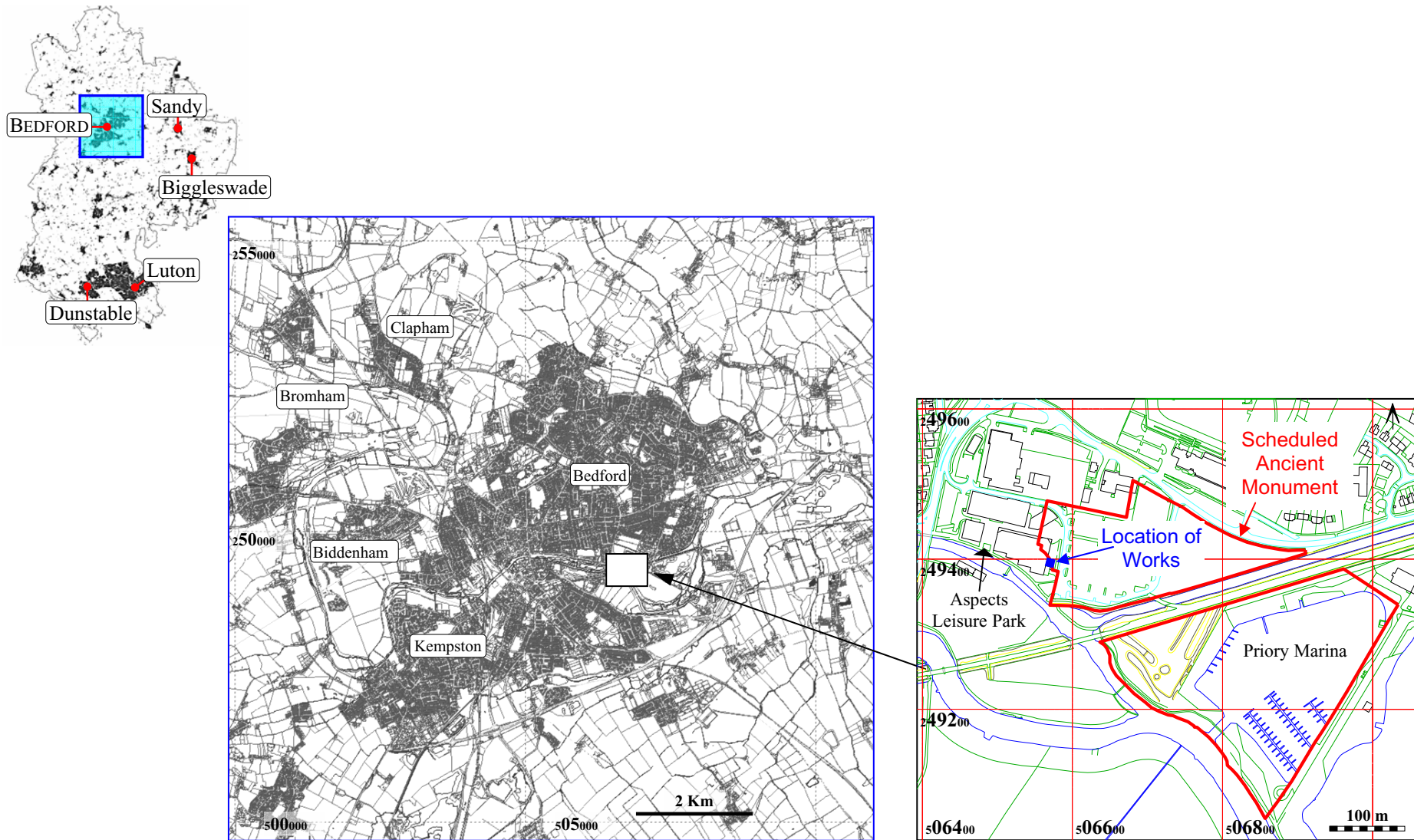


Figure 1: Site location

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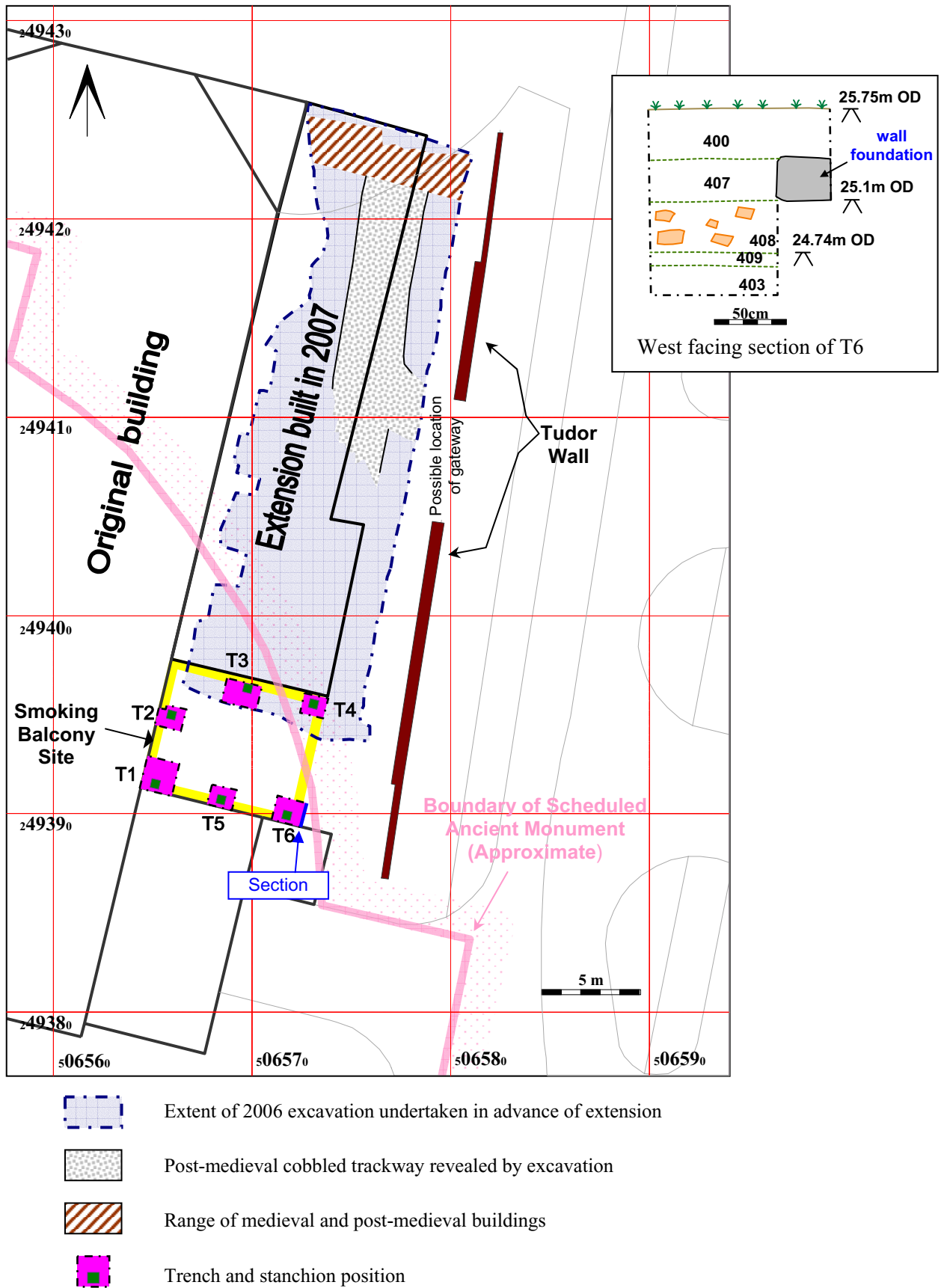


Figure 2: Plan of works

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