



LAND AT WELLESLEY ROAD Croydon

London Borough of Croydon

An archaeological evaluation report

February 2008



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

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An archaeological evaluation report

Site Code: WQU08
National Grid Reference: 532400 166210

Project Manager	Robin Nielsen
Author	Sadie Watson
Graphics	Sandra Rowntree

Museum of London Archaeology Service
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Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1
7ED
tel 020 7410 2200 fax 020 7410 2201
email molas@molas.org.uk
web www.molas.org.uk

Summary (non-technical)

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service on land at Wellesley Road, Croydon, Surrey CR10. The report was commissioned from MoLAS by Berkeley Homes (South East London) Limited.

Following the recommendations of English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), six evaluation trenches were excavated on the site.

The results of the field evaluation have helped to refine the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, which suggested that archaeological deposits might survive in limited areas towards its western boundary. No archaeological deposits or structures were found, due to truncation associated with previous structures on the site so, in the light of the revised understanding of the archaeological potential of the site, the report concludes that the proposed redevelopment will have no archaeological impact.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The evaluation took place on land at Wellesley Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR10, hereafter called ‘the site’. It is bounded by Bedford Park to the south and Tavistock Road to the east. The north part of the site lies adjacent to Woburn Road. The OS National Grid Ref. for centre of site is 532400 166210. It is 0.91 hectares in area and broadly triangular in shape. The site is vacant, comprising hard-standing, sloping masonry rubble and tarmac which has been colonised in places by scrub vegetation. A portion of the site is underlain by a basement car park, the entrance to which is still visible. The level of the ground surface adjacent to the site is at *c* 55m OD. The site code is WQU08.

A desk-top *Archaeological assessment* was previously prepared, which covers the whole area of the site (MoLAS, 2007). The *assessment* document should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial interpretation of its archaeological potential.

1.2 Planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Archaeological impact assessment* which formed the project design for the evaluation (see Section 3, MoLAS, 2007). The site does not contain any listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments or historical parks and gardens. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area or an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined in the Borough’s Unitary Development Plan and Constraints Map.

1.3 Planning background

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in response to archaeological conditions likely to be applied to the current planning application (Planning Application no. 07/01057/P) as recommended by the London Borough of Croydon’s archaeological advisers, the Greater London Archaeology advisory service. Such a condition would be in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance 16 and the adopted version of the Croydon Replacement UDP, policy UC14, currently a ‘saved’ planning policy in the emerging Local Development Framework.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by Berkeley Homes (South East London) and produced by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

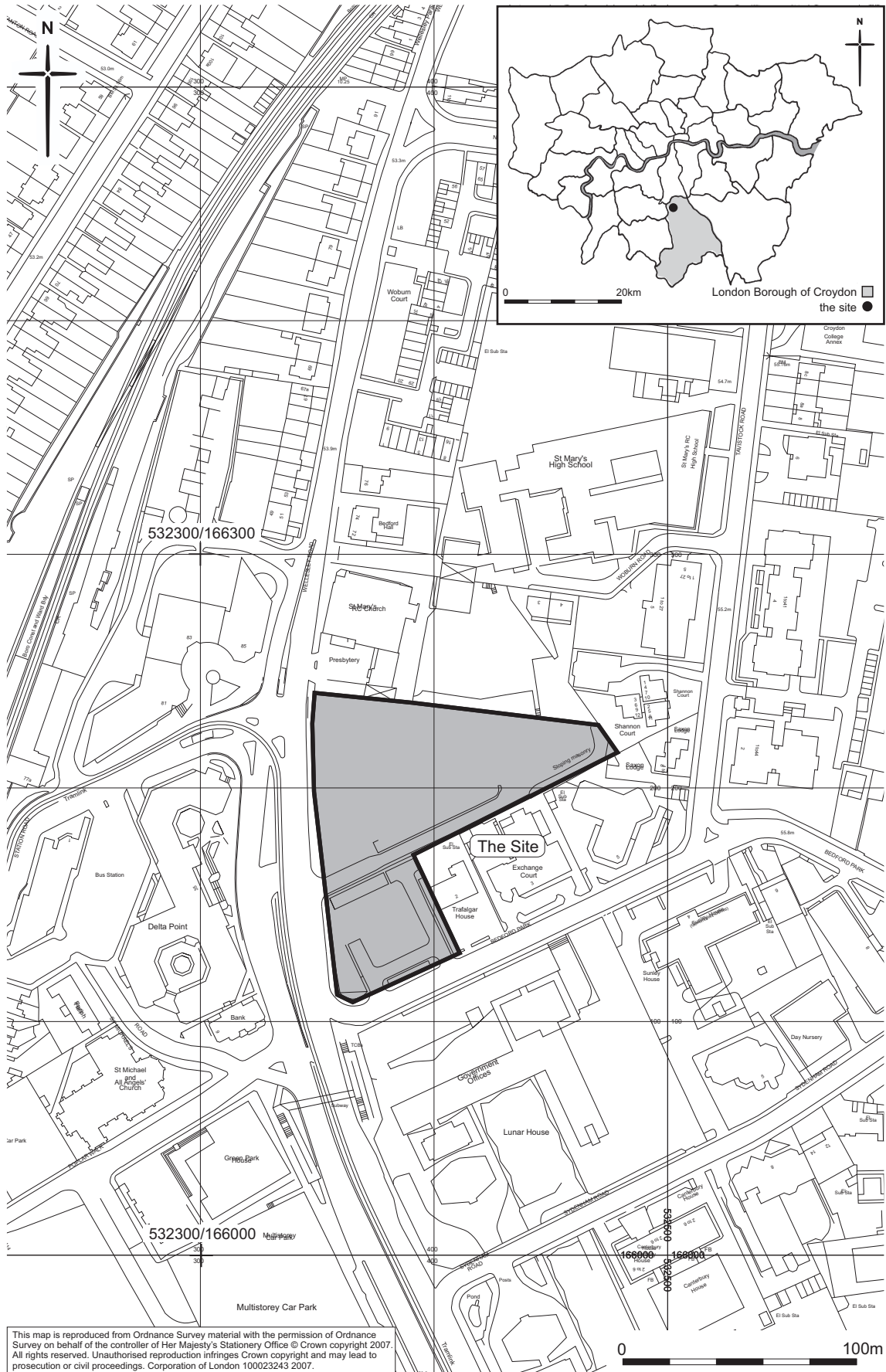


Fig 1 Site location

Field evaluation, and the *Evaluation report* which comments on the results of that exercise, are defined in the most recent English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) as intended to provide information about the archaeological resource in order to contribute to the:

- formulation of a strategy for the preservation or management of those remains; and/or
- formulation of an appropriate response or mitigation strategy to planning applications or other proposals which may adversely affect such archaeological remains, or enhance them; and/or
- formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigations within a programme of research

1.5 Aims and objectives

All research is undertaken within the priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology*, 2002.

The following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the evaluation (Section 2.2):

1. What is the nature and level of natural topography?
2. What are the earliest deposits identified?
3. The desk based assessment identified a low to moderate potential for archaeological remains dated to the prehistoric period. Is there any evidence for prehistoric settlement or other activity?
4. The desk based assessment identified a moderate potential for archaeological remains dated to the Roman period. Is there any evidence for Roman settlement or other activity?
5. The desk based assessment identified a low potential for archaeological remains dated to the early medieval period. Is there any evidence for early medieval settlement or other activity at the site?
6. The desk based assessment identified a low potential for archaeological remains dated to the medieval and post medieval periods. Is there evidence for medieval or post-medieval activity or later medieval or post-medieval occupation on the site?
7. What are the latest deposits identified?

2 Topographical and historical background

The geological and archaeological background was discussed in detail in the *archaeological desk based assessment* (MoLAS, 2007), so only a brief summary will be presented here.

2.1 Topography

The drift geology in the area of the site and its immediate environs comprise Lynch Hill Gravels, which are described as ‘post-diversionary Thames river terrace deposits: gravel, sandy and clayey in part’, over London Clay. These deposits are also known as the Wandle Terrace Gravels. The nearest natural watercourse is a stream 2km west of the site, which is a tributary of the River Wandle. There are also springs about 3km to the east of the site that feed the River Ravensbourne. Previous geotechnical investigations on the east and northern parts of the site revealed a substantial deposit of made ground over the natural gravels.

2.2 Prehistoric

Much of the archaeological evidence for this period is locally concentrated within central Croydon; there is no evidence for settlement or other activity within the immediate vicinity of the site.

2.3 Roman

Croydon lay on the line of a fairly important Roman road, sometimes referred to as the London to Portslade Way. Finds of pottery, coins and human remains, together with settlement/activity features, suggest a settled and farmed landscape at Croydon in the Roman period, with a sizable settlement focused near Park Street/George Street more than a kilometre south and south-west of the site, although there have been isolated chance finds nearer the site.

2.4 Saxon

Documentary evidence suggests that Croydon was an important centre in the Saxon period, although no Saxon artefacts have been found in the vicinity of the site.

2.5 Medieval

Croydon developed as a planned medieval town, centred on the Archbishop’s Palace, the site of which lies in the grounds of Old Palace School, c. 900m south-west of the site. No archaeological evidence of medieval activity has been found in the study area, although the site of a medieval manor house lies c. 340m south-west of the site. Archaeological evidence of medieval habitation and activity has been found in the historic centre of Croydon.

2.6 Post-medieval

In the mid 19th century the site was within meadowland, with two cottages and garden fronting Wellesley Road. By 1913, the terrace fronting Wellesley Road had expanded southwards, and there were buildings and a small orchard to the rear of the pub with the southern part of the site occupied by a hall and a club. The 1970 Ordnance Survey map shows the site cleared of all existing buildings, and replaced by two office blocks. Randolph House, to the north, was built in 1963-1969 to designs by William J Harvey, and the 19-storey Pembroke House to the south was built in 1963-7 to designs by Vincent & Wyn. Between 1955 and 1970, Wellesley Road was widened, encroaching on the sites of buildings on the west side of the site. Sometime in the late 1990s/early 2000s both tower blocks were demolished.

3 The evaluation

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and monitoring during the evaluation was carried out in accordance with the preceding *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2008), and the *MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

Six evaluation trenches were excavated along the higher ground to the western side of the site along Wellesley Road.

The slab/ground was broken out and cleared by contractors under MoLAS supervision. Trenches were excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of evaluation trenches were recorded by MoLAS Geomatics using GPS satellite locating software. This information was then plotted onto the OS grid.

A written and drawn record of all archaeological deposits encountered was made in accordance with the principles set out in the MoLAS site recording manual (MoLAS, 1994). Levels were calculated by traversing from a Bench Mark on the corner of Bedford Park.

The site has produced: 1 trench location plan, levels data and 6 trench record sheets.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code WQU08 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the evaluation

For trench locations see Fig 2.

<i>Evaluation Trench 1</i>	
Location	NW end of site
Dimensions	4.40m by 2.20m by 3.00m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	54.35m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	54.20m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	None seen
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	51.35 m OD (base of trench)
Natural observed	N/A



Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. City of London 100023243 2008.

Fig 2 Trench location

Trench 1 had modern topsoil to a depth of 0.15m, below which was a modern deposit of backfill, containing brick rubble and gravel. This was seen to a depth of 51.35m OD, at which point the trench was not further excavated due to safety considerations.

<i>Evaluation Trench 2</i>	
Location	North end of site
Dimensions	2.70m by 4.70m by 2.75m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	54.34m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	54.19m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	None seen
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	51.59 m OD (base of trench)
Natural observed	52.99m OD (loose sandy gravel)

Trench 2 had modern topsoil to a depth of 0.15m, below which was a loose, rubbly backfill deposit 1.35m deep. This was directly above and also filled a cut at the western end of the trench, which formed the western edge of the modern terracing for the lower basement area at the northeast of the site. Natural gravels were seen at 52.99m OD, to a depth of 51.59m OD.

<i>Evaluation Trench 3</i>	
Location	NW end of site
Dimensions	2.40m by 4.40m by 4.40m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	54.65m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	53.00m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.75m depth of late 19th/early 20th-century dumping
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	50.25 m OD (base of trench)
Natural observed	Not seen

Trench 3 was located within an area of recently demolished modern buildings and had a loose rubble backfill layer for a depth of 1.65m. Below this was an earlier (late 19th/early 20th century) silty backfill deposit, also containing rubble and other demolition debris, presumably related to the construction of the buildings on this part of the site in the early 20th century. No natural was seen due to the depth of the trench and safety considerations.

<i>Evaluation Trench 4</i>	
Location	West side of site
Dimensions	2.50m by 5.00m by 3.80m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	55.01m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	54.76m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.10m depth of late 19th/early 20th-century dumping
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	51.00 m OD (base of trench)
Natural observed	51.21m OD (loose sandy gravel)

Trench 4 had modern topsoil 0.25m deep, below which was a loose orange modern gravel and rubble backfill. This was 1.20m deep. Below this was a solid concrete slab, 0.20m thick. Below this slab was evidence of demolition of the previous buildings on the site (building material, crushed mortar etc), a deposit 0.27m deep. Below this was the same silty, late 19th/early 20th-century demolition deposit seen in trench 3, to a depth of 2.10m. Natural gravels were observed at 51.21m OD to a depth of 0.21m (the base of the trench).

<i>Evaluation Trench 5</i>	
Location	South west corner of site
Dimensions	5.00m by 2.70m by 1.90m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	55.21m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	54.11m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	None seen
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	53.31 m OD (base of trench)
Natural observed	54.21m OD (loose sandy gravel)

Trench 5 was located within an area that had had modern services running across it. The concrete slab was directly over a series of modern gravel and rubble backfills and make-up layers. Below this at the northern end was a modern brick and concrete service duct or drain run. The top of this was at 54.21m OD, and the base at 53.31m OD. Banded natural gravels were seen at the southern end, at an upper level of 54.21m OD, truncated by the cut for the modern duct or drain run.

<i>Evaluation Trench 6</i>	
Location	South west corner of site
Dimensions	2.70m by 4.70m by 2.30m deep
Modern ground level/top of slab	54.90m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	54.10m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	None seen
Level of base of deposits observed and/or base of trench	52.60m OD (base of trench)
Natural observed	Not seen

Trench 6 had a modern concrete slab and associated make-up 0.80m deep. Below this at the eastern end of the trench was the construction cut for the basement car park, seen to a depth of 52.60m but not fully exposed. At the western end this cut truncated modern gravel 1.70m deep.

3.3 Assessment of the evaluation

GLAAS guidelines (English Heritage, 1998) require an assessment of the success of the evaluation ‘in order to illustrate what level of confidence can be placed on the information which will provide the basis of the mitigation strategy’. In the case of this site the trenches were located in areas of potential survival and ranged across the western side of the site. Their locations would have revealed any significant deposits had any been encountered, given the varying degrees of truncation across this area. The observation of natural gravels in several of the trenches shows the levels of truncation, and also the lack of cut features extending into the natural ground below the demolition and make-up deposits above. The demolition deposits related to both 19th century and more modern phases of construction on the site and show that these destruction episodes will have effectively removed any structural remains or archaeological deposits.

4 Archaeological potential

4.1 Realisation of original research aims

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

The natural topography on the site was orangey-yellow banded sandy gravels, seen at truncated depths of 51.21m OD at the northern end of the site and 54.21m OD at the far southwestern corner.

What are the earliest deposits identified?

The earliest deposit seen on the site was a late 19th/early 20th-century demolition and dump layer, containing brick rubble, crushed chalk and other demolition debris. This presumably relates to the early 20th century when there was development in this part of the site.

The desk based assessment identified a low to moderate potential for archaeological remains dated to the prehistoric period. Is there any evidence for prehistoric settlement or other activity?

No evidence for prehistoric settlement or activity was found on the site.

The desk based assessment identified a moderate potential for archaeological remains dated to the Roman period. Is there any evidence for Roman settlement or other activity?

No evidence for Roman settlement or activity was found on the site.

The desk based assessment identified a low potential for archaeological remains dated to the early medieval period. Is there any evidence for early medieval settlement or other activity at the site?

No evidence for early medieval settlement or activity was found on the site.

The desk based assessment identified a low potential for archaeological remains dated to the medieval and post medieval periods. Is there evidence for medieval or post-medieval activity or later medieval or post-medieval occupation on the site?

No evidence for medieval settlement or activity was found on the site. The late post-medieval demolition deposit seen in trenches 3 and 4 relates to a period of development along the rear of the buildings fronting onto Wellesley Road.

What are the latest deposits identified?

The latest deposits identified were demolition layers relating to the clearance of modern office blocks on the site during the late 1990s or early 2000s.

4.2 General discussion of potential

The evaluation has shown that there is no potential for survival of ancient ground surfaces (horizontal archaeological stratification) on the site. There is also very little potential for survival of cut features. The average depth of archaeological deposits, if they can be classed as such, where they do survive is likely to be 1.00m of the late 19th/early 20th-century demolition and dumping layer seen in trenches 3 and 4.

4.3 Significance

There are no archaeological remains of any significance on the site.

5 Proposed development impact and recommendations

The proposed redevelopment at Wellesley Road involves the construction of a mixed-use residential and commercial scheme. The potential impact of this on any surviving archaeological deposits will be to remove them.

The assessment above (Section 4), however suggests that no archaeological remains survive on the site and therefore MoLAS does not consider that further archaeological mitigation is appropriate on the site and that any archaeological planning condition applied to the scheme either be discharged or withdrawn.

The decision on the appropriate archaeological response to the deposits revealed within Croydon rests with the Local Planning Authority as advised by their designated archaeological advisor - English Heritage's Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS).

6 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Paul Dunnett of Berkeley Homes for his assistance during the site works. MoLAS would like to thank Mark Dowsett of that organisation for his assistance in establishing details of truncation on the site and Mark Stevenson of GLAAS for his advice. The fieldwork was undertaken by the author and Richard Hewett. The Geomatics team who surveyed the trenches were Catherine Drew and Neville Constantine.

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8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

8.1 OASIS ID: molas1-38220

Project details

Project name Wellesley Road

Short description of the project 6 trench evaluation prior to development project

Project dates Start: 11-02-2008 End: 13-02-2008

Previous/future work No / No

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Other 13 - Waste ground

Methods & techniques 'Targeted Trenches'

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Position in the planning process Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CROYDON CROYDON Land at Wellesley Road

Postcode CR10

Study area 0.91 Hectares

Site coordinates TQ 32400 66210 51.3789679106 -0.09734314228830 51 22
44 N 000 05 50 W Point

Height OD Min: 51.21m Max: 54.21m

Project creators

Name of Organisation MoLAS

Project brief originator Self (i.e. landowner, developer, etc.)

Project design originator Berkely Homes (South East)

Project director/manager Robin Nielsen

Project supervisor Sadie Watson

Type of sponsor/funding body Berkely Homes (South East London) Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Contents 'Survey'

Digital Media available 'GIS','Survey'

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media available 'Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General
Notes','Report','Unpublished Text'

Paper Archive notes 6 trench record sheets

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land at Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR10, An archaeological evaluation report
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Date	2008
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