

Merricks Farm  
Middlezoy  
Somerset

An Archaeological Evaluation Report

October 2017



Merricks Farm  
Middlezoy  
Somerset


for

**C1 project code: C1/EVA/17/MMS**

**re:DSGN Ltd**

#### REPORT

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Date	10/10/17

Approved by	Cheryl Green, Post-Excavation Manager
Signed	

Date	11/10/17
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#### PROJECT DETAILS

Client project/scheme ref.	34/17/00016/ACN
Planning Application ref.	34/17/00016
Local Planning Authority	Sedgemoor District Council
Scheduled Monument Consent ref.	N/A
Historic Environment Record ref.	37707
Collecting Museum	South West Heritage Trust
Museum accession code	TTNCM 77/2017
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## Summary

*Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out an archaeological field evaluation through trial trenching to accompany a planning application relating to a development proposal at Merricks Farm, Middlezoy, Somerset.*

*The Site lies in an Area of High Archaeological Potential within the village centre. Early features and finds have been previously recovered from land to the north of the application area and it was considered possible that similar remains may have been preserved on the Site.*

*Despite the presence of prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval findspots and features in close proximity to the Site, no evidence was seen during this evaluation of any archaeological features or deposits. This area may have been peripheral to the areas of known activity.*

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out an archaeological field evaluation through trial trenching to accompany a planning application (planning reference: 34/17/00016) relating to a development proposal for the construction of 3 new dwellings and the conversion of agricultural buildings to two dwellings at Merricks Farm, Middlezoy, Somerset (the 'Site') (**Figure 1**). The project was commissioned by re:DSGN Ltd on behalf of their client.

1.2 The evaluation was requested by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) on the advice of the county Historic Environment Service (HES), South West Heritage Trust (SWHT). In a reply to an email consultation request from Mr Adrian Noon (Case Officer, SSDC) on 14 September 2017, Mr Steve Membury, Senior Historic Environment Officer, SWHT, stated:

*"The site lies within an Area of High Archaeological Potential as defined by the Retained Local Plan Policy. It is in the centre of the village; early features and finds have been previously recovered from land to the north of the application area. It is possible that similar remains may be preserved on the site, which could be impacted by this proposal. The proposal is therefore likely to impact on a heritage asset. However, there is currently insufficient information within the application on the nature of any archaeological remains to properly assess their interest.*

*For this reason, I recommend that the applicant be asked to provide further information on any archaeological remains on the site prior to the determination of this application. This is likely to require a field evaluation as indicated in paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework."*

1.3 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; trial trenching; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive preparation and deposition.

1.4 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (DCLG 2012).

## 2. The Site

2.1 The Site (centred on NGR ST 37679 32923) covers 4,943 square metres and is located on the eastern edge of Middlezoy, c. 7km to the south-east of Bridgwater, and within the grounds of Merricks Farm on the eastern side of Main Road (**Figure 1**). The Site is bounded to all sides by low-density housing, with Wynburg Farm to the east and agricultural land to the south-east on the opposite side of Back Lane. The Site is largely situated on level ground at an average height of c. 13m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The recorded geology for the Site is Mercia Mudstone Group – Mudstone and Halite Group (BGS, 2017). There is no recorded superficial (drift) geology. The soils are characterised as slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (CSAIS, 2017). The Site currently comprises agricultural buildings surrounded by farmyard areas and scrubland with some tree/vegetation cover.

2.2 The county Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that a number of heritage assets have been recorded within a 500m radius of the Site. The table below provides brief details of relevant assets and are organised by period.

HER ref.	Description	Period
11910	Cropmark enclosure, W of Middlezoy	Prehistoric/ Medieval
11911	Cropmark enclosure and drove, E of Middlezoy	Prehistoric/ Medieval
36414	Romano-British pot find, Middlezoy	Romano-British
44935	Evaluation (2000), Perhams Cottage, Middlezoy – two Romano-British post-holes, boundary ditches with late Saxon pottery	Romano-British; Late Saxon
15287	Watching brief (2003), Perhams Cottage, Middlezoy – Roman pottery, medieval occupation with pottery C12-13	Romano-British; Medieval
16341	Excavation (2000), Main Road, Middlezoy – some evidence for C9 & C10 occupation, but large number of features of medieval date	Late Saxon; Medieval
30261	Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement, Main Road, Middlezoy	Saxon; Medieval
10573	Burials, outside E edge of churchyard, Holy Cross Church, Middlezoy	Medieval

16338	Evaluation (1997), Main Road, Middlezoy – Bronze Age & Romano-British pottery, medieval occupation	Medieval
16339	Evaluation (1998), Main Road, Middlezoy - medieval occupation	Medieval
24684	Evaluation (2007), Jones Farm, 48 Main Road, Middlezoy – C12/C13 pit, C17 quarrying & boundary features, C13-C15 pottery, C17-C19 pits	Medieval; Post-medieval; Modern
30239	Watching brief (2010), land south of 55 Main Road, Middlezoy – post-medieval surface & stone wall	Post-medieval
30267	Post-medieval occupation, south of 55 Main Road, Middlezoy	Post-medieval
17477	Evaluation (2004), land to the rear of 26 Main Road, Middlezoy, Bridgwater	Post-medieval/ Modern
12587	Second World War airfield domestic site, Westonzoyland	Modern
16507	Second World War airfield accommodation area, Middlezoy	Modern
16510	Second World War military airfield battle headquarters, RAF Westonzoyland	Modern
16665	Watching brief (2003), Main Road, Middlezoy – C19 & C20 pits	Modern
17572	Evaluation (2004), land to the south of 6, Church Road, Middlezoy	Modern
29505	Geophysical survey (2010), north-west of Hollies Farm, Middlezoy – mostly negative results	N/A
31654	Watching brief (2012), church of the Holy Cross, Middlezoy	U/K
32265	Watching brief (2013), Holy Cross church, Middlezoy	U/K

- 2.3 Various archaeological investigations have added weight to the probability that Middlezoy originated as a Saxon settlement which developed as a planned medieval village (**HER 30261**), with occupation evenly distributed throughout its internal partitions. Possible earlier activity is represented by cropmark enclosures to the west (**HER 11910**) of the village and on the eastern side of Back Lane (**HER 11911**), both dating to either the prehistoric or medieval periods. Aside from isolated findspots, Bronze Age pottery was recovered during an evaluation c. 100m south of the Site (**HER 16338**) and Romano-British activity is evidenced by two post-holes found nearby (**HER 44935**). The Site was close to the heart of Saxon settlement, with evidence of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century occupation along Main Road (**HER 16341**) and a boundary ditch with late Saxon pottery c. 150m to the south (**HER 44935**). Its central position endured throughout the medieval period, with a 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century pit and pottery dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries recorded during an evaluation immediately to the north (**HER 24684**). Evidence of medieval occupation has also been found between c. 100m and c. 150m south of the Site (**HER 15287, 16338 & 16339**) and along Main Road (**HER 16341**).
- 2.4 The evaluation north of the Site also recorded 17<sup>th</sup> century quarrying and boundary features (**HER 24684**), with further post-medieval activity including an area of occupation (**HER 30267**) immediately to the west. On the northern side of the village are several sites associated with the nearby RAF airfield of Middlezoy (**HER 12587, 16507 & 16510**), a testimony to the important role this area played during the Second World War.

### 3. Archaeological aims and research objectives

- 3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological monitoring were to:
- identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during groundworks;
  - determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
  - recover environmental information, which may provide further information relating to the local historic environment of the area;
  - provide sufficient information to enable further mitigation strategies to be determined, where appropriate
- 3.2 The research objectives were to:
- determine whether there is any evidence specifically relating to the early settlement of Middlezoy

### 4. Methodology

- 4.1 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 1994, rev. 2001, 2008, 2014) and in accordance with the *Somerset County Council Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook* (2011). C1 adhered to the *Code*

of Conduct of the CIfA (1985, rev. 2000, 2014), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (CIfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times. The fieldwork methodology is summarised below.

- 4.2 C1 gave notification of the commencement of the works to the HES; it did not prove necessary for a representative to visit the Site to monitor archaeological fieldwork. Monitoring will continue until the deposition of the Site archive.
- 4.3 The archaeological evaluation consisted of six trenches, each measuring 20m long x 1.6m wide representing 4% of the proposal area. The trenches were laid out according to a pre-defined trench plan (see **Figure 1**) using Ordnance Survey (OS) co-ordinates with a TopCon GRS1 GPS unit.
- 4.4 A 360-degree tracked or 3CX type machine equipped with a toothless (grading) bucket was used to remove topsoil/overburden under the constant supervision of COAS archaeological staff. Machine excavation continued until natural geology was encountered. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts.
- 4.5 Core details of each trench were recorded on C1 *pro-forma* evaluation trench forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. This included logging a representative section of the trench to allow an understanding of the stratigraphy. A digital photograph of each trench in plan and representative section was taken in .jpg format. The photographic record also included working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

## 5. Results

- 5.1 Details of the deposits encountered are given in **Appendix 1**. The six evaluation trenches are shown in **Plates 1-6**.
- 5.2 The topsoil in all six trenches was uniformly a dark reddish grey (2.5YR 4/1) silty sandy clay with occasional angular sandstone fragments (<0.05m). The topsoil varied between 0.25m and 0.40m depth in trenches 2-5, and 0.60m and 0.65m depth in trenches 1 and 6. The underlying subsoil in all cases was a dark reddish grey (2.5YR 4/1) silty sandy clay with occasional angular sandstone fragments (<0.05m), and varied between 0.30m and 0.40m depth in all trenches. The subsoil in all trenches overlay natural deposits of red (2.5YR 4/6) very degraded sandstone with frequent platy sandstone fragments (<0.10m).
- 5.3 No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

## 6. The finds

- 6.1 No archaeological finds were observed or collected.

## 7. Discussion

- 7.1 Despite the presence of prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval findspots and archaeological sites in close proximity to the Site, no evidence was seen during this evaluation of any archaeological features or deposits. This area may have been peripheral to the areas of known activity.

## 8. Archive and dissemination

- 8.1 The NPPF requires that an archaeological archive arising from development works is made publicly accessible (para. 141). An archive comprises two parts: the paper/digital archive including site records and images; and the artefact/ecofact assemblage.

### Paper/digital archive

- 8.2 Where archaeological features/deposits are recorded, the archive generated from this usually comprises site records, drawings and photographs either in paper format or born-digital data. Within three months of the conclusion of a project this is normally transferred into the care of a Trusted Digital Repository such as the

Archaeology Data Service (ADS) as scanned paper records or native born-digital data. The digital archive will be compiled in accordance with the standards and requirements of the ADS, as set out on their website.

- 8.3 In this case, no archaeological evidence was encountered, so all relevant data has been incorporated into the assessment report and the paper/digital archive will be stored on the C1 cloud storage server or discarded.

#### Physical archive

- 8.4 The artefact/ecofact assemblage is the legal property of the landowner (excluding any items that fall under The Treasure Act 1996). However, it is usual practice for the landowner to transfer ownership of this assemblage to a receiving institution (usually a museum) once it has been fully assessed and/or analysed. Receiving institutions store the assemblage and make it publicly accessible. Alternatively, the landowner can choose to keep the assemblage but arrangements must be made to ensure its long-term curation and public accessibility in accordance with NPPF.

- 8.5 In this case, there was no physical archive generated.

#### Dissemination: report

- 8.6 Copies of the report will be submitted to the following:
- client and/or agent
  - the HES so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record (HER) the ADS, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>)

#### Dissemination: publication

- 8.7 A short entry will be prepared for publication in the summary section of the next county archaeological journal, the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*.

## 9. Bibliography

Cranfield Soils and Agrifood Institute: Soilscales (CSAIS), 2017	Available at: <a href="http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/#">http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/#</a> accessed on 29 September 2017
Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists (CIfA), December 2014	<i>Code of Conduct</i> . Reading: CIfA
Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), December 2014 (rev. 2015)	<i>Regulations for professional conduct</i> . Reading: CIfA
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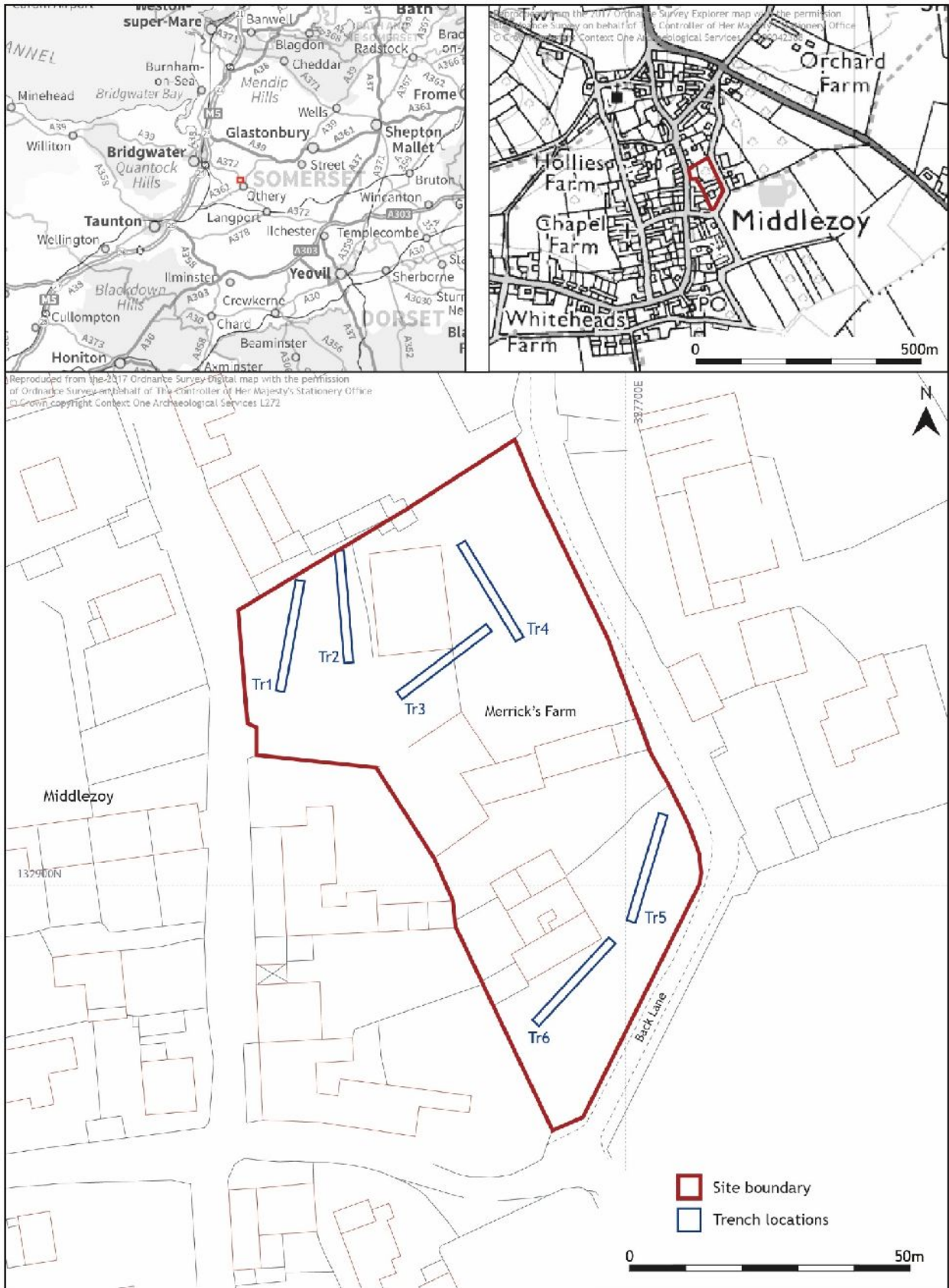


Figure 1. Site setting and trench locations





Plate 1. Trench 1 (facing NNE; 1m scales)



Plate 2. Trench 2 (facing N; 1m scales)



Plate 3. Trench 3 (facing SW; 1m scales)



Plate 4. Trench 4 (facing SSE; 1m scales)





Plate 5. Trench 5 (facing SSW; 1m scales)



Plate 6. Trench 6 (facing NE; 1m scales)

## Appendix 1: Context summary

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EARLIER THAN	CONTEMP. WITH	LATER THAN	LENGTH	WIDTH/DIAMETER	THICKNESS/DEPTH (m)
<b>Trench 1 - 20m long x 1.80m wide</b>									
100	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Dark reddish grey (2.5YR 4/1) silty sandy clay with occasional angular sandstone fragments <0.05m	NA	-	101	-	-	0.60
101	Modern	Layer	Subsoil. Light greenish grey (Gley 1 8/1) silty sandy clay with frequent angular sandstone fragments <0.10m	100	-	102	-	-	0.40
102	Natural	Layer	Natural. Red (2.5YR 4/6) very degraded sandstone with frequent platy sandstone fragments <0.10m	101	-	NA	-	-	>0.10
<b>Trench 2 - 20m long x 1.80m wide</b>									
200	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Dark reddish grey (2.5YR 4/1) silty sandy clay with occasional angular sandstone fragments <0.05m	NA	-	201	-	-	0.40
201	Modern	Layer	Subsoil. Light greenish grey (Gley 1 8/1) silty sandy clay with frequent angular sandstone fragments <0.10m	200	-	202	-	-	0.30
202	Natural	Layer	Natural. Red (2.5YR 4/6) very degraded sandstone with frequent platy sandstone fragments 0.10m	201	-	NA	-	-	>0.10
<b>Trench 3 - 20m long x 1.80m wide</b>									
300	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Dark reddish grey (2.5YR 4/1) silty sandy clay with occasional angular sandstone fragments <0.05m	NA	-	301	-	-	0.30
301	Modern	Layer	Subsoil. Light greenish grey (Gley 1 8/1) silty sandy clay with frequent angular sandstone fragments <0.10m	300	-	302	-	-	0.40
302	Natural	Layer	Natural. Red (2.5YR 4/6) very degraded sandstone with frequent platy sandstone fragments <0.10m	301	-	NA	-	-	>0.10
<b>Trench 4 - 20m long x 1.80m wide</b>									
400	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Dark reddish grey (2.5YR 4/1) silty sandy clay with occasional angular sandstone fragments <0.05m	NA	-	401	-	-	0.30
401	Modern	Layer	Subsoil. Light greenish grey (Gley 1 8/1) silty sandy clay with frequent angular sandstone fragments <0.10m	400	-	402	-	-	0.40
402	Natural	Layer	Natural. Red (2.5YR 4/6) very degraded sandstone with frequent platy sandstone fragments <0.10m	401	-	NA	-	-	>0.10
<b>Trench 5 - 20m long x 1.80m wide</b>									



500	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Dark reddish grey (2.5YR 4/1) silty sandy clay with occasional angular sandstone fragments <0.05m	NA	-	501	-	-	0.25
501	Modern	Layer	Subsoil. Light greenish grey (Gley 1 8/1) silty sandy clay with frequent angular sandstone fragments <0.10m	500	-	502	-	-	0.30
502	Natural	Layer	Natural. Red (2.5YR 4/6) very degraded sandstone with frequent platy sandstone fragments <0.10m	501	-	NA	-	-	>0.10
<b>Trench 6 - 20m long x 1.80m wide</b>									
600	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Dark reddish grey (2.5YR 4/1) silty sandy clay with occasional angular sandstone fragments <0.05m	NA	-	601	-	-	0.65
601	Modern	Layer	Subsoil. Light greenish grey (Gley 1 8/1) silty sandy clay with frequent angular sandstone fragments <0.10m	600	-	602	-	-	0.30
602	Natural	Layer	Natural. Red (2.5YR 4/6) very degraded sandstone with frequent platy sandstone fragments 0.10m	601	-	NA	-	-	>0.10

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