

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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31 MARTINS LANE, DORCHESTER-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE OX10 7JF

NGR SU 57945 94570

MAY 2021

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JMHS Project No: 4056

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available on OASIS.



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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief 31 Martins Lane, Dorchester-On-Thames Oxfordshire (NGR SU 57945 94573). One wall was partially removed, and three modern (20th century) features associated with the residential occupation of the site were noted. No archaeologically significant finds were observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located at 31 Martins Lane, Dorchester-On-Thames, OX10 7JF (NGR SU 57945 94573). The site lies to the north of the Roman small walled town of Dorchester. The development is located approximately 200m north east of the line of the Roman defences and is in an area of extramural settlement to the north of the Roman Town.

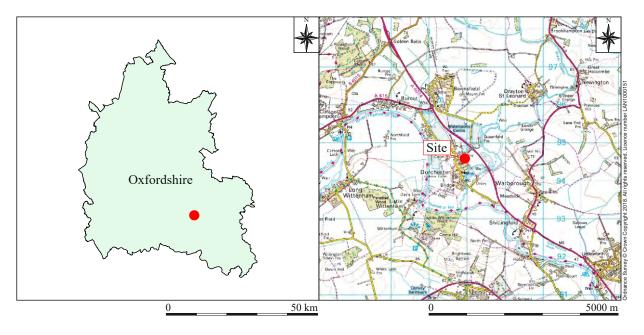
The site lies at approximately 50m above Ordnance Datum (OD). Areas to the north include artificial lakes, formed out of old gravel quarry pits, since filled with water to become recreation lakes. The confluence of the rivers Thames and Thame lies just to the south east, with the whole town sited in a meander of Thames. The underlying geology is Northmoor Sand and Gravel (First Terrace Floodplain) of the River Thames (BGS 1980).

1.2 Planning Background

South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for Construction of a new 3 bedroom detached dwelling on two floors, plus separate garage (as amended by site plan 02C and annotated Garage drawing received on 16 March 2019) at 31 Martins Lane, Dorchester-On-Thames, OX10 7JF (P19/S0541/FUL). Due to the potential of the site to contain archaeological remains conditions were attached requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the course of building operations or construction works on the site.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The proposal site lies in an area of some archaeological potential to the north of the Roman small walled town of Dorchester. The proposed development is located approximately 200m north east of the line of the Roman defences and is in an area of extramural settlement to the north of the Roman Town. An archaeological investigation undertaken in the 1980s approximately 20m west of the proposed development recorded a significant amount of Roman deposits dating from the late 1st/early 2nd century through to the 4th century (Historic Environment Record PRN 13969). This included a substantial stone-founded building, yard surfaces and building rubble as well as human remains in the form of a late 4th or 5th century burial. A series of undated enclosures and a trackway have been recorded as cropmarks from aerial photographs immediately north of the application area. These are very likely to relate to further Roman settlement (PRN D8545). Further cropmarks have also been recorded 60m east of the proposed new dwelling, which show a complex of features



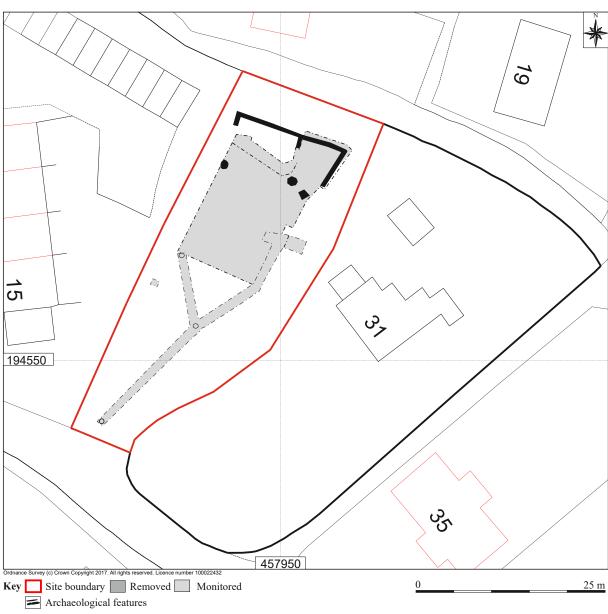


Figure 1: Site location

consisting of enclosures, field boundaries, ditches, pits, and a road (PRN 8544). An evaluation carried out at 26 Martin's Lane revealed a two ditches, both with evidence of recutting, one dating to Medieval period (with evidence of two recuts) and one Roman re-cut ditch and posthole, both dating to the $3^{rd} - 4^{th}$ century (Huvig 2020).

The above archaeological information was taken from the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) design brief for the previous archaeological field evaluation on the site (OCAS 2013).

A mid to late 2nd century Roman ditch was identified during an evaluation on the site that consisted of a 19m long trench being excavated across the footprint of the proposed new build. The ditch appeared to be a possible continuation of a cropmark identified 60m to the east of the site and was part of a complex of features consisting of enclosures, field boundaries, ditches, pits, and a road. Later 4th century activity was indicated by residual pottery in 20th century pits (JMHS 2013).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

• To make a record of any significant archaeological remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

• To record evidence of the Roman activity on the site.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with OCAS, on behalf of the local planning authority. The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

3.2 Methodology

Where archaeological horizons were encountered they were cleaned by hand and excavated appropriately. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

4 RESULTS (Figures 2 & 3)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

Footprint of House (Phase I - Figure 3, sections 1-3)

The initial monitoring of the ground reduction of the footprint of the house and garage was undertaken between 19-26 May 2020. During this time, the entire footprint was reduced to 0.75m below the existing ground level. The garden soil (01) and subsoil (02) were all that was encountered at these depths. All features recorded were cut into the subsoil in the 20^{th} century.

During this phase of work, general deposits across the site consisted of the lowest deposit encountered, the subsoil (02) which was a mid yellowish brown, clayey silt, 0.30 to 0.40m thick and occasional natural stone of up to 0.2m diameter. Above this was 0.30-0.55m of garden soil (01), a dark brown sandy silty loam, very friable with no inclusions of note; occasional modern debris was noted but not retained (i.e. 1928 coin, teaspoon).

A stone wall, **03**, was partially removed in advance of the garage (see Fig 2 for plan and Fig 3, section 2).

A very shallow, modern pit 05, with a single fill (06) was revealed. The fill was a mid-brown clayey silt with no inclusions, 0.89m diameter and 0.07m deep (see Fig 2 for plan and Fig 3, section 3).

Two modern masonry features were also uncovered, both associated with the midcentury residential development at 31 Martin's Lane. A decorative well, **04**, and manhole for the associated water service, **07**, were both uncovered to the southeast in the footprint of the house and garage (see Fig 2).

The foundations for the new build were mini-piles.

Service Trenches and Soakaways (Phase II - Figure 3, sections 4-9)

During this phase of work, the lowest deposit encountered was the natural geology (14), a mid-brownish yellow silty clay. General deposits across the site consisted of subsoil (08) likely the same as seen in previous phase, but due to heavy root disturbance, was unclear early in this monitoring event. This subsoil was mid orangey brown, up to 0.3m thick and irregular from bioturbation at times. This was under 0.40-1.02m of the same garden soil (01) as seen in the earlier monitoring phase, which was now under 0.32 to 0.40m of made ground (added after the initial monitoring in phase I). This made ground consisted of (09) hardcore, and (13) brick rubble/crush of between 0.16-0.41m in various places.

Reliability of Results

The reliability of the results is considered to be good. There was excellent cooperation from the landowner and the contractors.

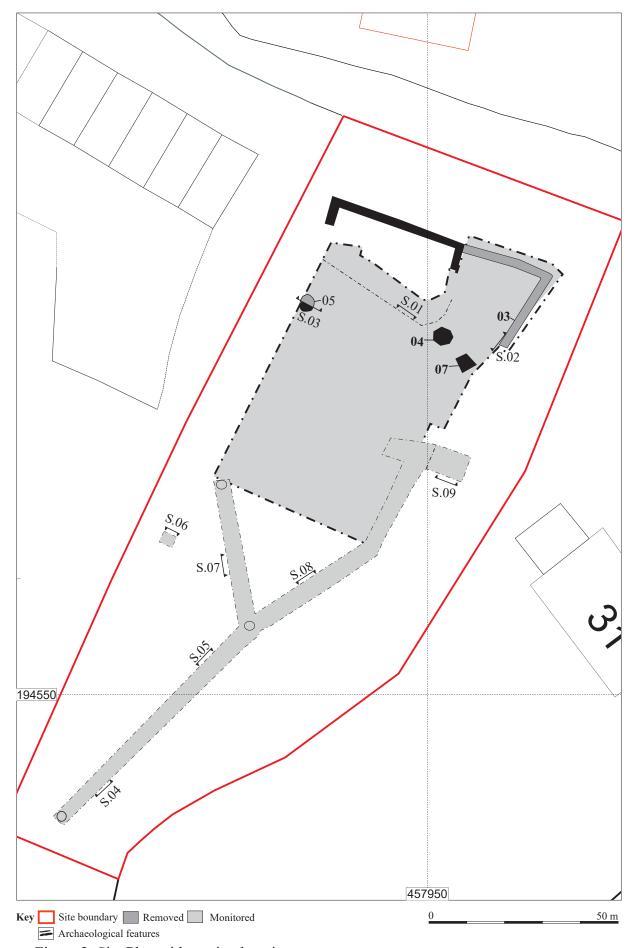


Figure 2: Site Plan with section locations

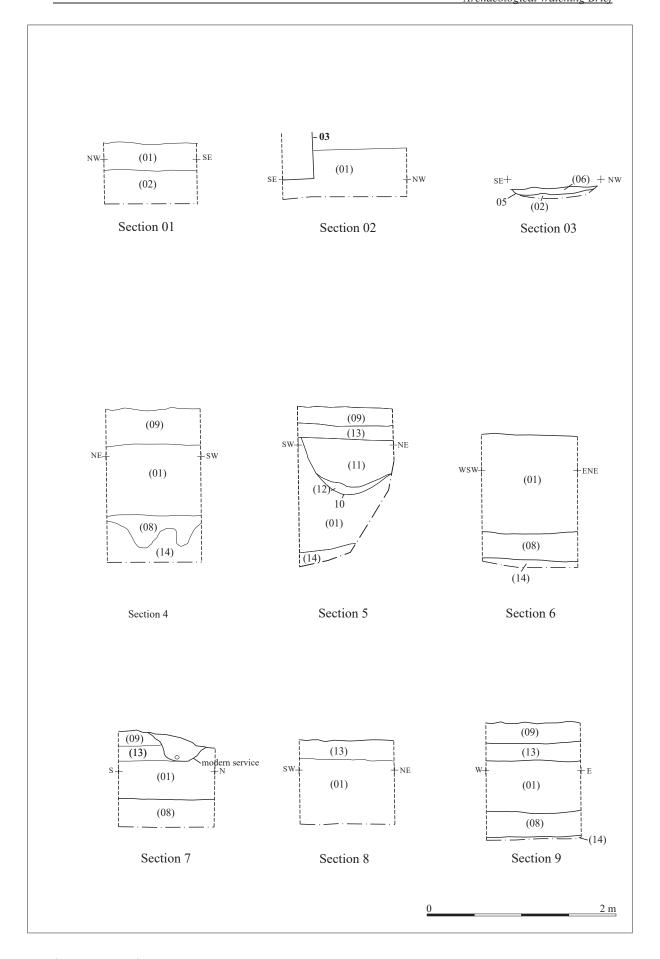


Figure 3: Sections



Plate 1: Garage footprint; Section 02, wall 03, prior to removal. View facing ENE.



Plate 2: Garage footprint; Modern decorative well, **04** (wall **03** visible in background). View facing east.





Plate 3: General area of footprint of house; background showing wall 03 removed and garage area covered with hardcore. View facing east.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

One sherd of 19th century whiteware with blue transferprint was recovered from the fill of a modern pit (06). It weighed 2g and appeared to be residual. It was not retained.

5.2 Metal

A badly corroded 1928 George V British Bronze Penny and a teaspoon with a makers mark saying "Sheffield Steel" was found in the garden soil (01) in the location of the future garage. They were noted but not retained.

6 DISCUSSION

The monitoring of the groundworks at 31 Martins Lane resulted in little insight into the archaeological activity of the area, due in large part to the depths of the known archaeological horizons and the subsequent measures taken to avoid impacting on those potential resources. Throughout the monitoring, only approximately 15m x 1m of the service trench leading down to the southern property boundary proved deep enough to potentially encounter any archaeology. In these locations, no archaeology was observed.

7 ARCHIVE

A Digital Archive is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services (ID: 4056) and will be made available upon request (to admin@jmheritageservices.co.uk). Digitised copies of all the primary records will be made publicly available as appendix to the Final Report submitted to OASIS (ID johnmoor1-422011).

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

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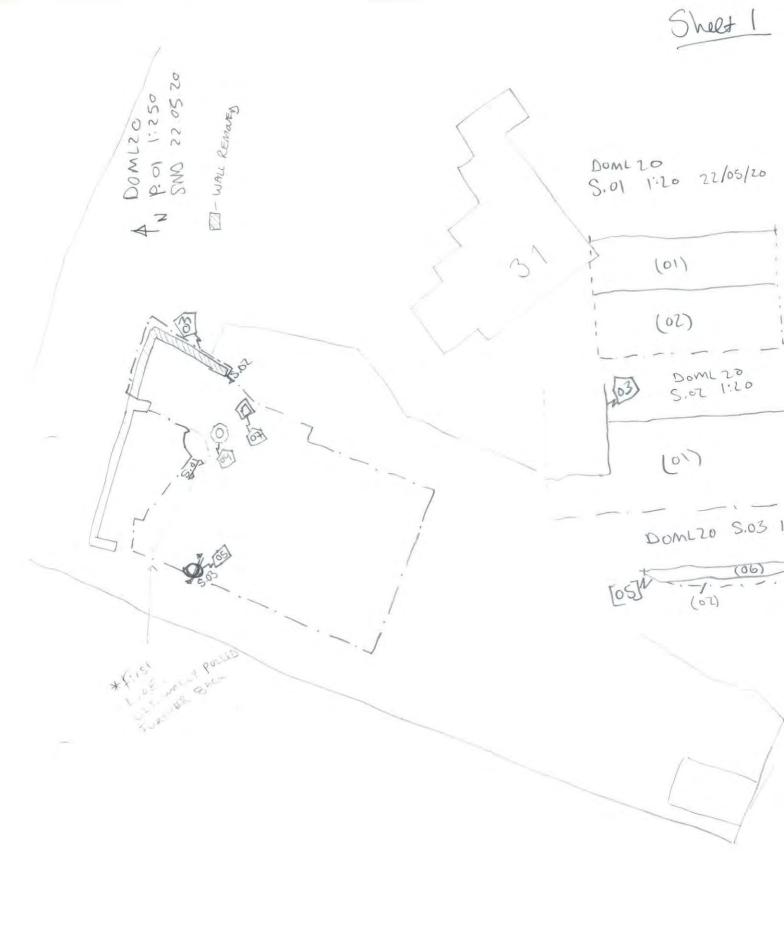
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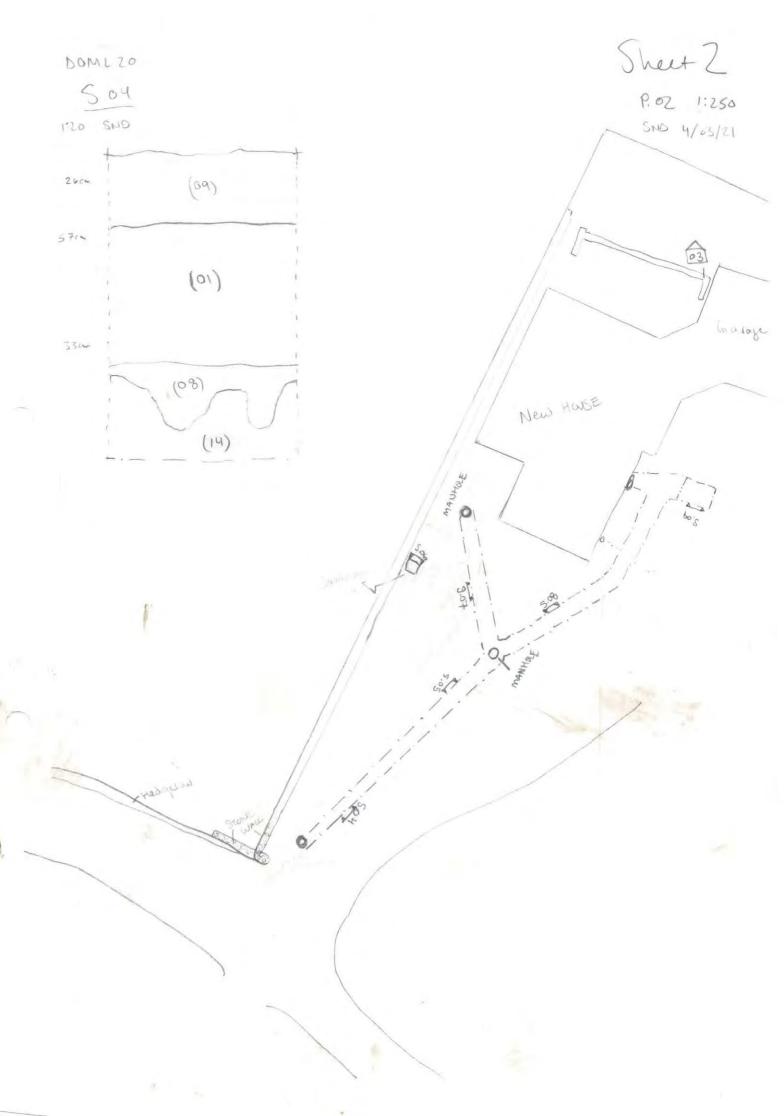
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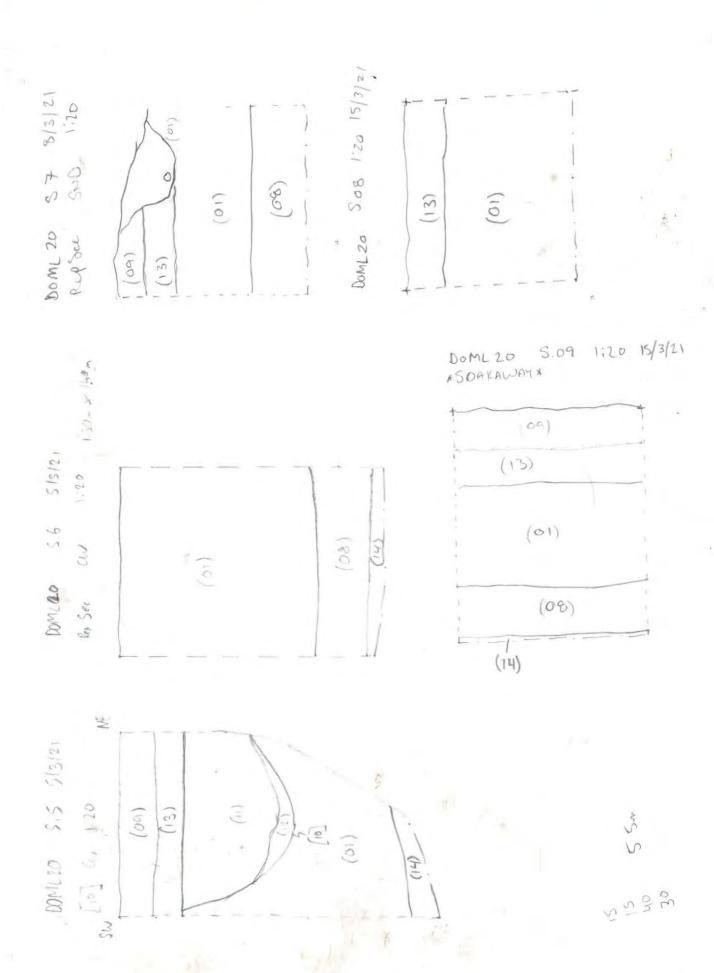
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Printable version

OASIS ID: johnmoor1-422011

Project details

Project name 31 Martins Lane, Dorchester-On-Thames

Short description of

the project

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief 31 Martins Lane, Dorchester-On-Thames Oxfordshire (NGR SU 57945 94573). One historic wall was partially removed, and three features dated to the 20th century and associated with the residential occupation of the site were noted. No archaeologically significant finds

were observed.

Start: 19-05-2020 End: 15-03-2021 Project dates

Previous/future work Yes / No

Any associated

project reference

codes

P19/S0541/FUL - Planning Application No.

Any associated project reference

codes

DOML 20 - Sitecode

Recording project

Any associated project reference

codes

4056 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference

codes

Site status

johnmoor1-422011 - OASIS form ID

Type of project

None

Current Land use

Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type PIT Uncertain Monument type WALL Modern Significant Finds **NONE None** "Watching Brief" Investigation type

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country England

Site location OXFORDSHIRE SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DORCHESTER 31 Martin's Lane,

Dorchester on Thames

1 of 3 27/05/2021, 08:31 Postcode **OX10 7JF**

Study area 100 Square metres

Site coordinates SU 57945 94573 51.646497639223 -1.162435823918 51 38 47 N 001 09 44 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation John Moore Heritage Services

Project brief originator

South Oxfordshire District Council

Project design originator

John Moore Heritage Services

Project

director/manager

John Moore

Project supervisor

Stephanie Duensing

Type of

sponsor/funding

body

Client

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?

No

4056

Digital Archive

recipient

John Moore Heritage Services

Digital Contents

Digital Archive ID

"Metal", "Stratigraphic", "other", "Ceramics"

Digital Media available

"GIS", "Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Text"

Digital Archive notes

Ill Digital files related to the project are maintained by John Moore Heritage Services

(ID 4056) and will be made available upon request (to

admin@jmheritageservices.co.uk).

Paper Archive

Exists?

No

Project

bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT 31 MARTINS LANE, DORCHESTER-ON-Title

THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE OX10 7JF

Duensing, S. Author(s)/Editor(s) Author(s)/Editor(s) Moore, J.

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details

JMHS report no.4056

Date 2021

Issuer or publisher John Moore Heritage Services

Place of issue or

publication

Wheatley

27/05/2021, 08:31 2 of 3

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