

Doonholm Road, Alloway: Archaeological Evaluation

Data Structure Report

13th December 2004



Rathmell

Archaeology Ltd

Overview

This Data Structure Report presents the findings of archaeological investigative works required by I H Borland (Contractors) Ltd in respect of the proposed construction of a new road between Doonholm Road and Murdoch's Lone at Alloway, South Ayrshire. (NGR: NS 3386 1802). The archaeological works, carried out on the 24th and 25th November 2004, were designed to inform any necessary mitigation of impact on the archaeological remains within their development area.

The eastern half of the proposed linear development area was subject to evaluation. This is a triangular piece of ground that is a relatively flat open field that rises slightly as it goes north-westwards. The land is currently under pastoral use and is occasionally used to graze horses. The eastern edge of the area is defined by Doonholm Road, with Alloway Mote and the steep drop to the River Doon forming the south and southwest boundary. The northern edge is a wooded and overgrown railway cutting.

Prior to the evaluation there were no recorded archaeological sites within the area of proposed development; however this part of Alloway has the potential for being archaeological sensitive. To the immediate south of the development area there is the Scheduled Ancient Monument (AMH 2864) of Alloway Mote.

The findings presented below inform on the character of any archaeologically significant features within the proposed development area. These investigative works were sufficient to inform on archaeological hazard and allow the development of any necessary subsequent mitigation. The character of such further stages of work will need to be agreed with South Ayrshire Council and the West of Scotland Archaeology Service through a revised method statement.

Rathmell Archaeology Ltd was appointed by I H Borland (Contractors) Ltd, on behalf of South Ayrshire Council, to act with regard to the archaeological issues. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service, who advises South Ayrshire Council on archaeological matters, provided guidance on the character of archaeological investigations required on this site.

Project Works

The programme of works agreed with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service commenced with an archaeological evaluation through machine cut trenches extending to 5% of the study area. These works were undertaken in keeping with the submitted Method Statement with the on-site works taking place on the 24th and 25th November 2004.

In total some 390m² of trenches were opened, exceeding the agreed target. This increase was mainly due to the trenches being cut at 1.8m rather than 1.6m width; this variation was due to the trench width being gauged by judgement while using a 1.2m bucket. Trench excavation was complicated in the southern portion of the site, adjacent to Alloway Mote, by the severely waterlogged nature of the site.

The majority of exposed features within the trenches were investigated and evaluated to determine archaeological significance. All works were conducted in accordance with WoSAS Standard Conditions, the Institute of Field Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

Findings: Desktop study

Statutory protected sites

The desktop study did not identify the presence, within the study area (see Fig 2), of any sites protected for their archaeological or historical merit under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 or buildings protected under the Town and Country Planning Act 1997 (Historic Scotland 1998).



Figure 1a: Moll 1745



Figure 1b: Roy 1755



Figure 1c: Armstrong 1775



Figure 1d: Ainslie 1821



Figure 1e: Thomson 1828

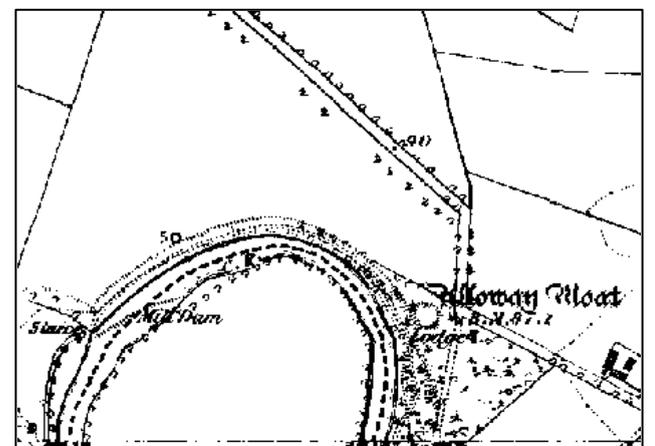


Figure 1f: 1st ed. Ordnance Survey 1860

Nor were any sites identified that have the confident potential to contain the burial of human skeletal material, and hence raise the difficulties of the crime of violation of sepulchre (the common law crime of unlawful interference with human remains).

To the south of the development area is the Scheduled Ancient Monument (AMH 2864) of Alloway Mote. This legally defined area was not impacted on by the archaeological investigations.

Archaeological and Historical sites

Sound pre-Ordnance Survey cartographic evidence is available from 1755 (Roy; Figure 1b) to 1828 (Thomson; Figure 1e). These maps consistently represent the development area as agricultural ground with no suggestion of structures or settlement. Roy (1755) appears to illustrate a road or track running adjacent to the River Doon through the area which is not replicated on any other cartographic source. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1860) shows a comparable landscape, if enclosed.

To the immediate south of the development stands the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Alloway Mote (formerly Alloway Moat; see Fig 1f and Auld & Cuthill 1845). This ringwork is situated on an escarpment overlooking the River Doon standing some 500m north of Doonholm. It is first illustrated on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1860); an area that had originally been depicted as wooded in 1828 (Thomson; Fig 1e) with no suggestion of the antiquity.

The remains survive as a tree-planted and scrub-covered D-shaped ringwork, measuring 10.3m across internally. A massive defensive bank, upto 9m thick and existing to a height of 1.8m internally and 5m externally, is clearly visible on three sides of the mote. The partial remains of an external ditch, 8m broad and 1.5m in depth is evident in the south to south-east. The west to south-west edge of the site is formed by a steep slope which drops down to the River Doon. The original extent of the site is unknown due to erosion, which appears to have denuded the outer defences.

Alloway Mote was noted by Talbot as an early medieval ring-work, however, as no recorded excavations have been undertaken on this site, his assessment must have been made through comparison with other similar excavated sites. The River Doon is attested as being the likely boundary between the kingdoms of Scots and Galloway in the early twelfth century (Brooke 1994, Strawhorn 1989). Alloway, in South Kyle, constituted a border zone with Carrick to the south, over the Doon. After the suppression of Galloway and the subsequent peace agreement of 1186, a series of early ringworks were erected including Greenan, built by Roger de Scalebroc and Dunduff, by Walter de Champenais (Hendry). It has been inferred that Alloway Mote was constructed at the same period (ibid) as part of the royal strategy of suppression and feudalisation. The significance of Alloway Mote may have been very short lived though, with the new castle at Ayr, erected in 1197. This construction re-aligned the military and judicial focus onto the proto-burgh and castle at Ayr and it has been suggested Alloway Mote was abandoned soon after.

The New Statistical Account (Auld & Cuthill 1845) record that the 'magistrates of Ayr appear from the records of the town to have frequently held courts of justice ... on its summit, which was hollowed out in the middle ..'. However, this is contradicted by more modern study where the extant records, dating from 1492, record the normal meeting place was the tollbooth in Ayr (Hendry).

The site was scheduled by Historic Scotland in 1969 under The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1931 and 1979). This afforded the existing remains protection from any potential development or other works. The extent of the scheduled area is 45m in diameter, centred on the interior of the earthwork.

The limited size of the ringwork has highlighted the potential for associated domestic settlement, a vil, in the immediate vicinity of the ringwork. No such medieval settlement has been identified to date, but the development area should be considered a likely location for such activity.

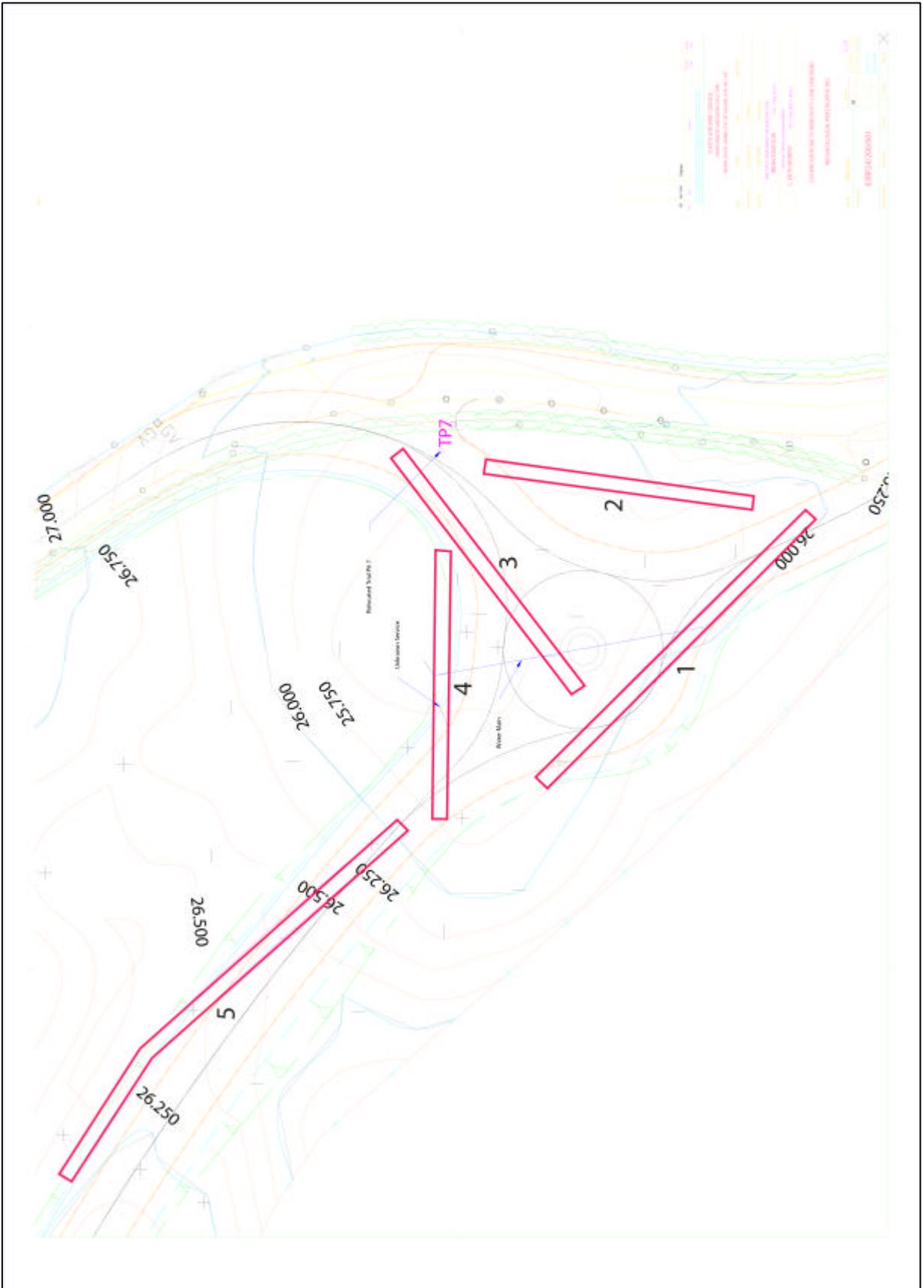


Figure2: Trenches as excavated (in red); relative to topography and proposed road structure



Figure 3a: Trench 2 from south



Figure 3b: Water Main [004] in Trench 1



Figure 3c: Trench 4 from east



Figure 3d: Trench 1 from northwest

Findings: Evaluation trenches

All five trenches exhibited a common stratigraphic sequence with mid-brown clayey topsoil [001] up to 290mm deep, overlaying generally homogenous subsoil of orangey brown clay with occasional silty patches [002].

All trenches, bar Trench 2, contained extensive and distinct plough scaring, orientated east-southeast by west-northwest [003]. There was no evidence of intercutting within these plough scars, suggesting a single distinct attempt to improve the shallow damp soil.

The dampness of the ground was not reflected through any volume of field drains; the exception being a short stretch of rubble field drain [006] in Trench 4.

A number of modern, machine cut service trenches were noted during the works. The first [004] running roughly north to south across the study area has been tentatively matched to the known route of a 9" water main. Another deep service trench [007], notable through the presence of blue clay in the fill, was noted aligned northeast to southwest crossing Trench 4. This service does not match any recorded utility and hence the function of this service is unknown. A possible second, comparable feature [008] was noted at the very terminal end of the same trench. One possibility discussed on-site with South Ayrshire Council was that the main feature [007] may well be an irregular drain for culverts on the adjacent Doonholm Road.

Discussion

No significant archaeological features were identified during the course of the archaeological evaluation at Doonholm Road, Alloway.

The plough scars appear to derive from a single phase of modern ploughing, presumably an attempt to deepen soils and improve drainage. The general absence of field drainage suggests that: either the dampness of the ground has been exacerbated by modern landscape change (such as the construction of Doonholm Road); or the dampness was so severe that the ground has predominantly been used for pasture in the recent past. The latter appears the more likely conclusion given the gently rolling topography and the underlying clay subsoil.

The modern service trenches are clearly of twentieth century origin; these features were distinct within the trenches by the dominance of blue clay within the fill of the features. This clay is presumably the deep underlying subsoil.

The desktop study highlighted the potential for an associated domestic settlement, a vil, in the immediate vicinity of the ringwork, Alloway Mote. No such medieval settlement has been identified by this evaluation, and the dampness of the ground was quickly taken as an indication that the ground to the immediate north of the ringwork was not a suitable site. More hope was attached to the northern end of Trench 5 as it rose up the slight ridge out of the damp ground. However, this trench had a very shallow soil and intense plough scars throughout its length. Overall it is considered that any subsequent consideration of a vil associated with Alloway Mote should look on the raised ground to the east and southeast of the ringwork.

Recommendations

The archaeological evaluation failed to identify any significant archaeological features or artefacts within the study area. Consequently, while the development area is in close proximity to Alloway Mote, a nationally significant monument, we recommend that no further archaeological works are appropriate.

The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with South Ayrshire Council and the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, their advisors. Confirmation that the



Figure 4: Panorama of evaluation trenches from north

above recommendations are acceptable should be confirmed with these bodies prior to the implementation of any development works whose appropriateness may rely on these recommendations.

Conclusion

A programme of archaeological investigative works was undertaken on the eastern portion of the proposed new road between Doonholm Road and Murdoch's Lone at Alloway, South Ayrshire (NGR: NS 338 180). An evaluation was carried on the 24th and 25th November 2004. The evaluation comprised five trenches covering approximately 5% of the total development area.

A representative sample, as agreed with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, of all of the uncovered features with archaeological potential was investigated. The trenches exhibited a common stratigraphic sequence with a ploughsoil of between 150mm and 290mm overlying clay subsoil. Frequent plough scars were identified, as well as a rubble field drain and three modern service trenches.

No significant archaeological features were identified during the course of the archaeological evaluation.

References

Documentary

- | | | |
|----------------------|------|--|
| Auld, R & Cuthill, A | 1845 | Parish of Ayr, <i>New Statistical Account of Scotland</i> |
| Brooke, D | 1994 | <i>Wild Men and Holy Places: St Ninian, Whithorn and the Medieval Realm of Galloway</i> |
| Dalrymple & McGill | 1799 | Parish of Air, <i>Statistical Account of Scotland</i> |
| Hendry, A | | <i>The Barony of Alloway 1324-1754</i> , Ayrshire Monograph No.10 |
| Historic Scotland | 2002 | <i>A list of scheduled monuments, properties in care and protected wrecks in Scotland 2002</i> , Haddington |
| Strawhorn, J | 1989 | <i>The History of Ayr</i> , Edinburgh |
| SODev | 1994 | <i>National Planning Policy Guideline 5, Archaeology and planning</i> , Scottish Office Development Department. |
| SOEnv | 1994 | <i>Planning Advice Note 42, Archaeology</i> , Scottish Office Environmental Department. |
| Talbot, EJ | 1975 | 'Early Scottish castles of earth and timber – recent field-work and excavation', <i>Scot Archaeological Forum Vol. 6</i> |

Cartographic

- | | | |
|------|--------------|--|
| 1745 | Moll, Herman | The Shire of Renfrew with and the North Part of Air |
| 1755 | Roy | Military Desktop study of Scotland; sheets 03 |
| 1775 | Armstrong | A new map of Ayrshire comprehending Kyle, Cunningham and Carrick |
| 1821 | Ainslie, J | Ainslie's Map of the Southern Part of Scotland |
| 1828 | Thomson, J | Northern Part of Ayrshire |

Appendix 1: Trench Details

Within this appendix a standardised set of data pertaining to the evaluation trenches is presented.

All measurement distances quoted along the trench measure based on the quoted orientation of the trench. See Figure 2 for trench locations.

Trench 1

Orientation:	Southeast to Northwest.
Size:	47.8m by 1.8m (86.0m ²).
Ploughsoil depth:	260mm.
Subsoil character	Quite compact orangey-brown silty clay. Contains frequent coal inclusions and more silt-rich areas.
Modern features:	Thirteen plough scars [003] and one cut for the water main [004] were noted
Significant features:	None.
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 2

Orientation:	North to South.
Size:	34.5m by 1.8m (62.1m ²).
Ploughsoil depth:	260mm to 270mm.
Subsoil character	Quite compact orangey-brown silty clay. Contains frequent coal inclusions and more silt-rich areas.
Modern features:	One plough scar [005] and a trackway /variation in clay?? were noted.
Significant features:	None.
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 3

Orientation:	Southwest to Northeast
Size:	39m by 1.8m (70.2m ²).
Ploughsoil depth:	250mm to 290mm.
Subsoil character	Quite compact orangey-brown silty clay. Contains frequent coal inclusions and more silt-rich areas.
Modern features:	Fifteen plough scars [003] and one cut for the water main [004] were noted
Significant features:	None.
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 4

Orientation:	East to West.
Size:	34m by 1.8m (61.2m ²).
Ploughsoil depth:	240mm to 260mm.
Subsoil character	Quite compact orangey-brown silty clay. Contains frequent coal inclusions and more silt-rich areas.
Modern features:	Two plough scars [003], one cut for the water main [004], one rubble drain [006], one drain or service trench cut [007] and one service trench cut [008] were all noted
Significant features:	None.
Artefacts:	None

Trench 5

Orientation:	Southeast to Northwest
Size:	61.5m by 1.8m (110.7m ²).
Ploughsoil depth:	150mm to 220mm.
Subsoil character	Quite compact orangey-brown silty clay. Contains frequent coal inclusions and more silt-rich areas.
Modern features:	Plough scars [003] at very infrequent intervals
Significant features:	None.
Artefacts:	None

Appendix 2: Record Summaries

Context Summaries

No.	Trench	Interpretation	Description
001	All	Topsoil	Moderately compact mid-brown clayey soil. Contains occasional to rare sub-rounded stones. Rootlets throughout. Very damp to saturated. Upto 280mm thick.
002	All	Subsoil	Quite compact orangey-brown silty clay. Contains frequent coal inclusions and more silt-rich areas. Extends across majority of site.
003	1 / 3 / 4 / 5	Plough Scars	Topsoil filled scrapes, aligned east-west. 150mm – 200mm broad.
004	1 / 3 / 4	Water Main	Blue clay filled cut, running north-south. 600mm broad.
005	2	Plough Scar	Deep scrape aligned north-south. 220mm broad and 60mm deep.

006	4	Rubble Field Drain	Rubble filled slot, 200mm broad.
007	4	Drain / Service Trench	Blue clay filled cut, aligned northeast-southwest. 700mm broad.
008	4	Service Trench	Blue clay filled corner feature.

Drawing Register

Sheet	No.	Title	Scale	Date	Author
1	1	Post-ex plan of trenches 1-5	1:100	25/11/04	TR

Photographic Register

Image	Description	From	Date
1	General of site	SE	24/11/04
2	Trench 1	SE	24/11/04
3	Trench 2	S	24/11/04
4	Trench 3	SW	24/11/04
5	Trench 4	W	24/11/04
6	General of site	NW	24/11/04
7	General of site	N	24/11/04
8	General of site	N	24/11/04
9	General of site – showing ground rising to the west	E	24/11/04
10	Alloway Mote	N	24/11/04

Appendix 3: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	South Ayrshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Doonholm Road, Alloway
PARISH:	Ayr
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Thomas Rees
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NS 338 180
START DATE (this season)	24 th November 2004
END DATE (this season)	25 th November 2004
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None

PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	<p>A programme of archaeological investigative works was undertaken on the eastern portion of the proposed new road between Doonholm Road and Murdoch's Lone at Alloway, South Ayrshire. The evaluation comprised five trenches covering approximately 5% of the total development area.</p> <p>The trenches exhibited a common stratigraphic sequence with a ploughsoil of between 150mm and 290mm overlying clay subsoil. Frequent plough scars were identified, as well as a rubble field drain and three modern service trenches. No significant archaeological features were identified during the course of the archaeological evaluation.</p>
PROJECT CODE:	04049
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	IH Borland (Contractors) Ltd
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report to West of Scotland Archaeology Service and archive to National Monuments Record of Scotland.

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