

5 MEAD VILLAS

PRELIMINARY RROOST ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Report prepared for:

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VERSION	DETAILS	DATE
1	DRAFT	Dec 2025
2	FINAL	Dec 2025

The findings of this report are valid at the time of writing (Dec 2025) .

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) has been prepared to inform a planning application for the conversion of the existing garage and slight raising of the existing roof to facilitate a proposal with a provision of a garden shed to the front garden of 5 Mead Villas, Box.

The site supports a range of common habitats associated with a residential garden, including amenity grassland, ornamental planting, scattered trees.

The main house (building 1) has no potential to support roosting bats.

The garage (Building 2) was assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats due to their construction and condition, absence of suitable roosting features, and lack of evidence of bat activity.

No further surveys are considered to be required to inform the impact assessment associated with this application on the basis that the likelihood of the garage supporting a bat roost is negligible given the levels of lighting and disturbance, the permanent presence of the cat in the rafters and the lack of evidence of bat use. The garage has no suitability for a roost of any higher conservation status than a night/feeding roost, of which there are numerous alternatives in the locale. Further surveys would therefore be disproportionate to the likelihood and anticipated level of impact, despite the sites location within the

Given the absence of roost features, the minimal scale of works, and no change to key commuting/foraging features or lighting, there is no realistic impact pathway to the SAC bat populations and therefore there are no likely significant effects on the Bath & Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC anticipated.

This approach accords with BCT (2024) guidance, which advises that where all potential roosting features have been inspected and no evidence is found, further activity surveys are not proportionate, particularly in low/negligible suitability structures.

However, the following actions are recommended on a precautionary basis:

- Given the negligible likelihood of a bat roost being present in the garage but acknowledging that there is still a very limited chance of bats being present, it is recommended that a pre-works inspection is carried out prior to commencement by a suitably licensed and experienced ecologist to ascertain if conditions have changed and to identify the presence of bats and/or signs of bat roosts. In this event, works would not be permitted until further surveys are completed and a license had been obtained.

- Vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) or immediately following a check by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement should be taken, including the installation of bird and bat boxes, any new planting areas should include pollinator-friendly planting and use of native species in any new landscaping.

With the implementation of these measures, the proposed development will comply with relevant wildlife legislation and planning policy and is capable of delivering biodiversity enhancements in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Environment Act 2021 and Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) is to help support a planning application at 5 Mead Villas to demolish the existing garage and construct a new single storey residential extension and to reconfigure the associated landscaping. The site location is shown in Figure 1.

1.2 COMPETENCY STATEMENT

Ben Mitchell Bsc(Hons) MCIEEM has been a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Managers since 2013 and has worked as a professional consultant ecologist since 2012. Prior to becoming self-employed, he was a principal ecologist at an award winning, multi-disciplinary consultancy. He holds bat, great crested newt and schedule 1 bird survey licenses in England, Wales and Scotland since 2015 (Scotland 2010) and has acted in the capacity of named ecologist on 14 Natural England Bat Mitigation licenses. He also presented at the National Bat Conference in 2019 on Bats and the planning system.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This PRA report provides an assessment of the potential effects of the scheme on bats associated with the Site, as defined by the information set out in this report.

This report provides a description of the ecological base line, considers the potential impacts of the scheme, makes recommendations for mitigation and enhancement measures where appropriate.

1.4 LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY - SUMMARY

This report has been prepared in line with current UK wildlife legislation and planning policy. The law protects many species and habitats that could be present on or near the site, including bats, nesting birds, reptiles and badgers. Some species and their breeding sites or shelters are protected all year round, even when not in use.

Planning policy requires that new developments avoid harm to wildlife, mitigate impacts where they cannot be avoided, and compensate for any remaining effects.

National policy (NPPF) and local policy (Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 50) both require that planning

decisions protect and enhance biodiversity, follow the mitigation hierarchy, and seek opportunities to improve habitats and ecological networks.

For further information on the relevant legislation and planning policies please see Section 8 -
LEGISLATION & PLANNING POLICY

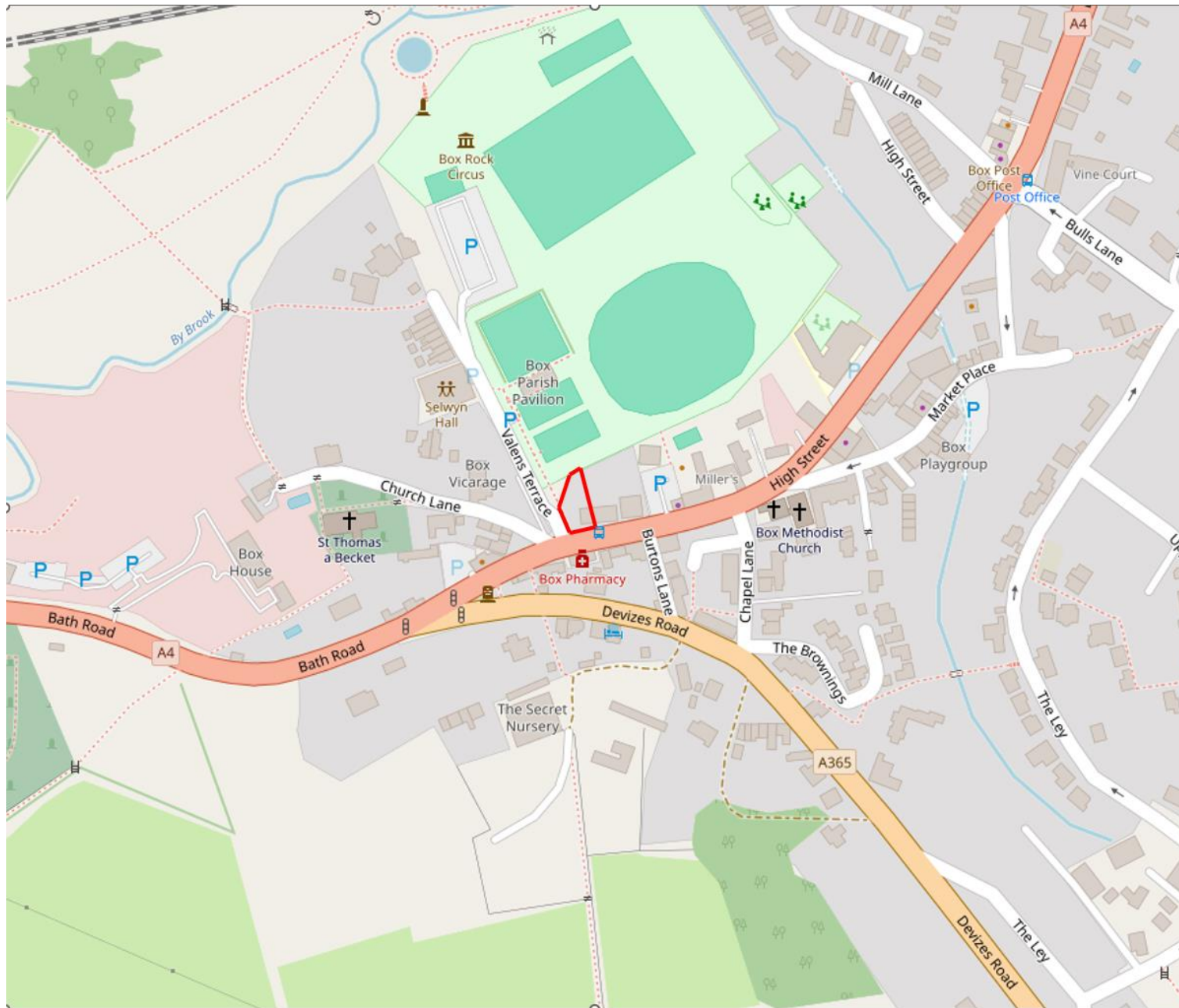


Figure 1 Site Location

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 DESK STUDY

A review was conducted of all relevant existing information within the zone of influence of the Site to enable a full assessment of the relationship between the Sites and any records of species or habitats of conservation interest and connective habitats in a landscape context. The following sources have been accessed for this purpose:

- MAGIC website (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>)
- Google Earth (<https://earth.google.com/web/>)
- Wildlife Assessment Check Tool (<https://www.biodiversityinplanning.org/wildlife-assessment-check/>)

A Local Environmental Record Centre (LERC) search has not been obtained in this instance as the proposal is extremely limited in its potential effect on local conservation sites or priority/protected species. Furthermore, the site does not support any habitat of conservation importance and any proximity to a designated site in terms of habitat is not relevant to this proposal.

2.2 PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT SURVEY

A PEA survey of the Site was undertaken on the 27th November 2025 by Ben Mitchell BSc MCIEEM. The weather was dry and clear and considered ideal. This survey was completed in accordance with Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition (BCT, 2024) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) and BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development (British Standards Institute, 2013).

2.3 SURVEY LIMITATIONS

All areas of the garage could be accessed including boxes/boards laid on the rafters to inspect for evidence of bat use. There was no indication that the site had been cleaned or significant items removed prior to the survey. The timing of the survey is slightly sub optimal in terms of the confidence in the assessment regarding the absence of bat droppings and foraging remains, however given the dry conditions internally and absence of movement of the contents of the garage, it is not unreasonable to expect bat droppings and butterfly/moth wings to remain in an identifiable state in the months since the

main bat activity period. Therefore, the conclusions of the report in respect to the absence of physical evidence of bat use are considered valid.

No limitations were experienced that would affect the confidence in the conclusions of this assessment.

3 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 DESK STUDY

3.1.1 DESIGNATED SITES

No designated sites occur within the site boundary. The nearest statutory designated sites are the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC (1.51 km NE) and Box Mine SSSI (1.57 km NE). The site lies within the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC consultation zones. No direct or indirect impacts are anticipated due to the small scale of the proposals and lack of impact pathways.

SITE	DESIGNATION	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	DISTANCE_KM	DIRECTION
Bath & Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC (Box Mine component)	SAC (European site)	51.4175	-2.2386	800m	NE
Box Mine SSSI	SSSI (Biological)	51.41978	-2.23436	800m	NE
Cotswolds	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Na	Na	Na	Na

3.1.2 SPECIES

Bats

No EPS Mitigation licences have been granted within 2km of the site in the last 5 years.

3.2 HABITAT SURVEY

3.2.1 SITE CONTEXT

The site is located in central Box, Wiltshire, within a predominantly rural agricultural landscape. It is immediately adjacent to the Box Recreational Grounds leading down to the By Brook. The main conurbation of Box lies to the south and east. Box itself is surrounded by farmland, interspersed with

larger areas of woodland to the south and east hedgerows, scattered mature trees and small blocks of woodland, forming a largely semi-natural matrix typical of the wider countryside in this part of Wiltshire.

The immediate site comprises an end terrace residential bungalow and associated domestic garden situated within an open agricultural setting. The garden provides a mosaic of managed amenity grassland, ornamental planting, scattered fruit and garden trees, dense shrubbery and small garden structures, with a pond offering a local water resource.

The site is linked to the wider landscape via Box Recreational grounds and beyond into a network of field boundary hedgerows, tree lines and woodland blocks, however the predominance of amenity greenspace and urban areas limits suitability. There is a busy, lit A road immediately south of the site.

3.2.2 HABITATS

3.1 Vegetated Garden

The majority of the site comprises a tightly managed domestic garden. This includes regularly mown amenity grassland, gravel driveway, patio and garden structures such as sheds and a summerhouse. These areas are of low ecological value, providing habitat primarily for common invertebrates and garden bird species. Mixed boundary vegetation also provides nesting and sheltering opportunities for birds and small mammals.

3.3 Individual Trees

The site supports one mature trees and there are 2 other mature trees immediately to the north of the site boundary. These are spreading in structure and provide some limited foraging and nesting opportunities for bird species and invertebrate communities associated with mature garden trees. The trees contribute to structural diversity within the garden and may offer navigational and commuting features for bats moving through the landscape. No trees had any suitability for roosting bats but they would provide some measure of seasonal invertebrate foraging resource.

Building 1

The main building comprises an end terrace three storey residential house with rendered cavity and a pitched, tiled roof. The structure is in generally good condition with well-sealed modern uPVC windows and doors, intact roof tiles, tight-fitting fascia boards, and no lifted tiles or gaps that would provide access points for bats. The building also contains a loft void with exposed timbers and insulation; this area is clean and dry with no evidence of bat activity such as droppings, staining, feeding remains or characteristic scratch marks.

Externally, the building fabric is well-maintained and does not exhibit features such as lifted or missing roof tiles, gaps beneath bargeboards, soffits or ridge tiles, or cracks in the render that could offer roosting opportunities. The eaves and verge areas are tightly sealed and there are no cavities or crevices suitable for bats.

Building 1 has no potential to support roosting bats.

Building 2

The garage is a modern, timber frames, single storey structure. The garage backs immediately onto the raised street level to the rear. It is constructed of modern single width blockwork with steel structural beams. The roof trusses are modern and in good repair and the roof is covered in a breathable membrane and modern pan tiles. It is partially open fronted and currently used for storage. The western gable of the garage is densely blocked by the adjacent tree. A permanent cat bed is installed in the rafters that was occupied at the time of survey. No evidence of nesting bird use was identified.

No evidence of bat use was identified. No droppings were present despite a thorough search of the boxes and wooden boards sitting atop the rafters. No feeding remains were observed. No fraying of the breathable membrane was recorded that could indicate a roost location, staining was also absent from any of the roof timbers/membrane and there was no evidence of urine staining on any of the items present.

Given the absence of suitable access points or roosting features, the building has very limited suitability for night roosting bats given how open it is and the presence of the cat will further reduce the likelihood of bat use of the main roof hanging space.

As it is an open fronted building in an area known for high numbers of bats, the garage does have some limited suitability as a night/feeding roost despite the levels of disturbance, however these roost types are of low ecological value and are very hard to conclusively identify in the absence of physical evidence.



Figure 2 Existing Site Plan



Plate 1 – Building 2 from N



Plate 2 – Building 1 from NW



Plate 3 – Building 1 along rear



Plate 4 – Building 2 – Front



Plate 5 – Building 2 west gable



Plate 6 – Building 2 entrance



Plate 7 - Building 2 interior west

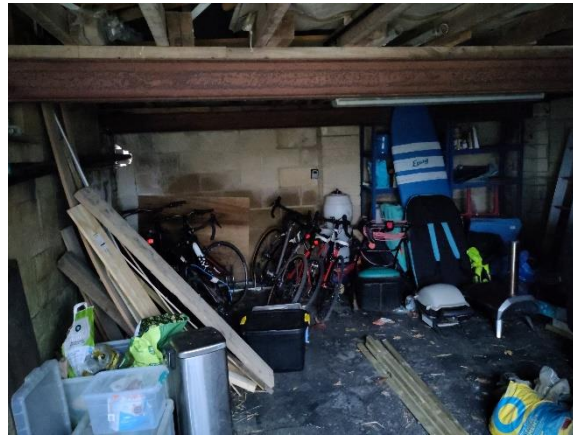


Plate 8 - Building 2 interior South



Plate 9 - Building 2 Cat bed in rafters



Plate 10 Building 2 roof trusses and BRM

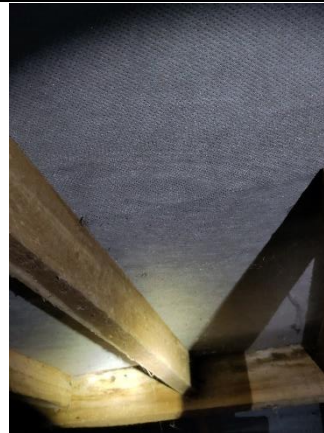


Plate 11 Building 2 BRM



Plate 12 - Building 2 - roof structure and cat



Plate 13 – Northern view from boundary



Plate 14 – view east



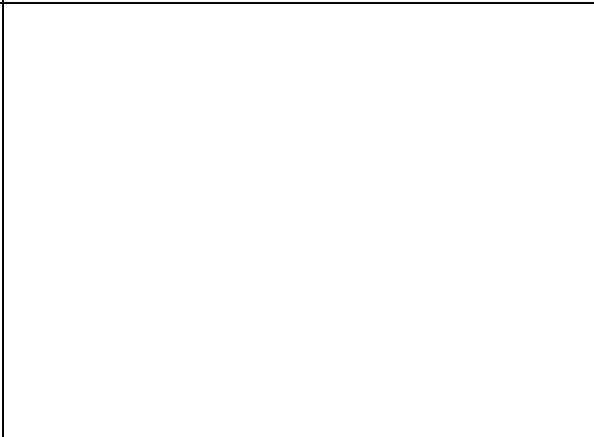
Plate 15 – view of property from north



Plate 16 – lane along western boundary to main road



Plate 17 – garden



4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 FURTHER SURVEYS

No further surveys are considered to be required to inform the impact assessment associated with this application on a proportional and risk-based basis:

- the likelihood of the garage supporting a bat roost is negligible given the levels of lighting and disturbance, the permanent presence of the cat in the rafters and the lack of evidence of bat use.
- The garage has no suitability for a roost of any higher conservation status than a night/feeding roost, of which there are numerous alternatives in the locale.

Further formal surveys would therefore be disproportionate to the likelihood and anticipated level of risk/impact despite the site lying within the Bath & Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC consultation zone

4.2 MITIGATION

Given the negligible likelihood of a bat roost being present in the garage but acknowledging that there is still a very limited chance of bats being present, it is recommended that a pre-works inspection is carried out by a suitably licensed and experienced ecologist to ascertain if conditions have changed and to identify the presence of bats and/or signs of bat roosts. In this event, works would not be permitted until further surveys are completed and a license had been obtained.

Vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) or immediately following a check by a suitably qualified ecologist.

4.3 COMPENSATION

No compensation is required.

4.4 ENHANCEMENT

- Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement should be taken, including the installation of bird and bat boxes, any new planting areas should include pollinator-friendly planting and use of native species in any new landscaping.

5 LEGISLATION & PLANNING POLICY

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Provides protection for all wild birds, their nests and eggs (s.1), including additional protections for Schedule 1 species; protects certain wild animals (s.9) and plants (s.13); and makes it an offence to release or allow the spread of invasive non-native species listed on Schedule 9.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) Implements strict protection for European Protected Species (EPS) such as all UK bats, great crested newt, dormouse and otter. Offences include deliberate capture, killing, injury or disturbance, and damage or destruction of breeding sites or resting places (Reg. 43). The Regulations also govern the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process for “habitats sites” (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites).

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 & Environment Act 2021 Section 41 of the NERC Act lists species and habitats of principal importance for biodiversity. The biodiversity duty on public authorities (s.40) has been strengthened by the Environment Act 2021 (s.102) to require action to conserve and enhance biodiversity and to report on it.

Legally protected species likely to be relevant to the Site (subject to habitat presence) include:

- Bats – EPS protected under the Habitats Regulations and WCA 1981; roosts are protected year-round, even when unoccupied.
- Breeding birds – All wild birds, nests and eggs protected under WCA 1981 (s.1); additional protections apply to Schedule 1 species.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Dec 2024; amended Feb 2025)

Chapter 15 (“Conserving and enhancing the natural environment”) requires planning decisions to minimise impacts and secure net gains for biodiversity (para. 187), apply the mitigation hierarchy, protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and irreplaceable habitats (para. 193), and give equivalent protection to potential SPAs, possible SACs, listed or proposed Ramsar sites, and compensatory sites (para. 194). The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where significant effects on a habitats site are likely, unless an Appropriate Assessment concludes no adverse effect on site integrity (para. 195).

Local Planning Policy – Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Core Policy 50 seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, requiring proposals to follow the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate, compensate), demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity, and seek enhancement opportunities. Development should protect features of conservation value and contribute to local ecological networks and strategic biodiversity measures where appropriate. Core Policy 50 remains the operative local policy at the time of writing.

6 REFERENCES

6.1 METHODOLOGY AND BEST PRACTICE REFERENCES

The following references, legislation and policy documents have informed the methods, assessment, and recommendations presented in this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. They represent current best practice guidance, statutory instruments, and planning policy relevant to ecology and biodiversity conservation in England.

Bat Conservation Trust (2024) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*, 4th Edition (Amended March 2024). BCT, London.

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