

Proposed Dwelling to the north of
554 Canal Bridge,
Semington,
TROWBRIDGE,
BA14 6JT

Job Ref: 4515



PLANNING APPEAL STATEMENT

- 1 Introduction & Background
- 2 Sustainable Development
- 3 Landscape Character and Settlement Separation
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1 Introduction & Background

- 1.1 AB Architectural Design are instructed to prepare an appeal against the decision of Wiltshire Council for the refusal of LPA Reference PL/2026/02084 for the Proposed erection of 1No. high-quality, sustainable, single storey dwelling including car port, home office, new planting and biodiversity enhancement measures at Land North of 554 Canal Bridge, Semington, Wiltshire, BA14 6JT.
- 1.2 The application was refused on the 3rd July 2026 with two reasons for refusal and they relate to the principle of development outside of the settlement boundaries. The LPA issued two reasons for refusal on its decision notice. These focus on spatial strategy/ settlement boundaries, transport sustainability, and rural landscape character. This statement demonstrates that when properly assessed under the NPPF and paragraph 11(d) 'tilted balance', the localised, minor impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the core housing delivery and environmental benefits of the proposals.
- 1.3 Below are the refusal reasons for ease of reference.
 1. The proposed development, due to its location outside the defined settlement boundaries of Semington and Berryfield within the open countryside, represents an unsustainable form of development that is contrary to the spatial strategy set out in Core Policies 1,2, and 15 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
The proposal would result in the unjustified encroachment of residential development into the countryside and would fail to support a sustainable pattern of growth. The site is poorly related to services and facilities and future occupiers would be likely to rely predominantly on the private motor vehicle, contrary to Core Policies 60 and 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.
Furthermore, the proposal would erode the physical and visual separation between Berryfield and Semington, contrary to Policy 19 of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, which seeks to maintain the separation between those settlements. The

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proposal would also fail to conserve the openness of the countryside and maintain the transition between settlement edge and countryside, contrary to Policy 18 of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan.

When assessed against paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework, the adverse impacts of the development are considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

2. The proposed development would introduce built form, domestic curtilage and associated paraphernalia into an undeveloped parcel of agricultural land that contributes to the open and rural character of the area. The development would result in the urbanisation of the site and would harm the character and appearance of the countryside, which is characterised by open fields and limited built form.

As such, the proposal is contrary to Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, Policy 18 of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to recognise and protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

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2 Sustainable Development

- 2.1 As confirmed within the case officers report, Wiltshire council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. The current position is confirmed at 2.8 years which constitutes a shortfall. As such, paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'NPPF') is relevant and the 'tilted balance' is triggered due to the shortfall in housing supply.
- 2.2 Consequently, in accordance with Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the 'tilted balance' is explicitly engaged. The relevant development plan policies for the supply of housing – specifically Core Policies 1,2, & 15 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) must be considered out of date.
- 2.3 Under the tilted balance framework, planning permission must be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. As demonstrated below, the rigid application of settlement boundaries to block a high-quality, single storey, self build dwelling misjudges the planning balance given the severe housing shortfall.
- 2.4 Refusal reason 1 states that the development is located within the open countryside outside defined settlement boundaries, leading to an unsustainable pattern of growth reliant on private vehicles. However, while the site sits outside the defined settlement boundaries, it is geographically and physically non-isolated.
- 2.5 The site forms an organic, minor pocket of development immediately north of the existing residential area of Canal Bridge (adjacent to No. 554). It provides direct access to the existing local cycle network along the canal corridor, creating active travel options for future residents. Furthermore the case officer report notes that the sites localised transport pressures are heavily mitigated by the dedicated home-office

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- 2.6 The appeal site is located in the village of Semington and effectively represents a rounding off, of the village with development to the South, & South-East of the site as shown in Figure 1 below.

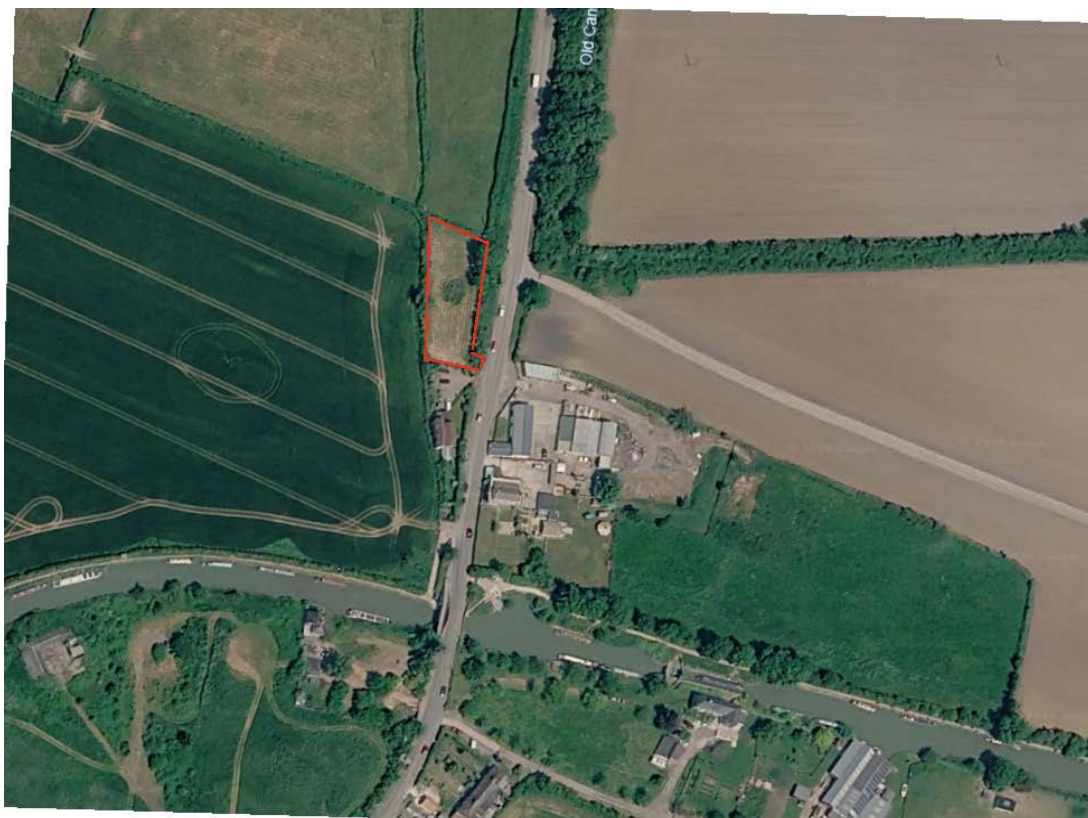


Figure 1 – Site context.

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- 2.7 The site measures approximately 1365m² and Fig 2 shows the site in the wider context. Whilst this is open countryside development for the purposes of a planning judgement, this is not isolated development and the site is positioned in a very sustainable and accessible location. Semington is classed as a “Large Village” under the Wiltshire core policies.



*Figure 2 – Wider Site context
Site close to A361, A350 and
within walking distance of
village amenities.*

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2.8 Local Amenities:

- a) Access to the Kennet and Avon Canal is a 2 minute walk from the site. *Appendix 1.*
- b) The Somerset Arms within the village has been designated as an Asset of Community Value and this stands until May 2028. The Somerset Arms is around 0.3 miles from the site or a 6 minute walk. *Appendix 2*
- c) Semington Village Hall is within the centre of the village and is also around 0.3 miles or a 7 minute walk. *Appendix 3*
- d) St Georges church is around 0.5 miles or around a 10 minute walk. *Appendix 4*
- e) St Georges Cof E primary school is around 0.5 miles or around an 11 minute walk. *Appendix 5*
- f) The Milk Churn Public house & Restaurant is around 0.6 miles or around a 13 minute walk and is located to the North of the site within the Melksham and Bowerhill Village settlement. *Appendix 6*

2.9 The site is also fully accessible from the National Cycle network with Route No. 403 passing by the site on the “old” A350 Semington High St. (*Appendix 7*) and Route No. 4 running along the side of the Kennet and Avon Canal (*Appendix 8*), located 2 minutes’ walk to the South of the site.

2.10 The site will be accessed and can be seen from the “old” A350 Semington High St. as identified in Fig 3. The site is also partially visible from public Footpath MELW10 Fig 4. below.

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Fig 3. Entrance to the site off the "old" A350 (Looking West)



Fig 4. Site viewed from MELW10 (Looking East)

- 2.11 The application site also sits between two large towns including
- a) Melksham to the North which is around 3.4miles or a 7 minute drive. *Appendix 9*
 - b) Trowbridge to the South-West which is around 4.5 miles or a 12 minute drive to the centre. *Appendix 10*
- Both towns have a mainline railway providing access to the South-West, Bath, Bristol & London.

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- 2.12 This appeal proposal seeks to establish a high-quality, sustainable, single storey dwelling including car port, home office, new planting and biodiversity enhancement measures. With the purpose-built home office on the site. This will reduce the need to travel between work and employment. The house and office would each accommodate a sedum roof and the house would facilitate solar panels.
- 2.13 A new pond will be incorporated into the landscaping design, not only for the benefit of the local wildlife but as part of the SUDS system. There will be wildflower meadow areas and an increase in native planting throughout the site. All of this new development would transform what is currently a barren parcel of land which is not large enough for any worthwhile agricultural use.
- 2.14 The development would be a low-slung development over a single storey in order for it to assimilate within the surrounding landscape. It would therefore have the ability to comply with lifetime home standards and be fully wheelchair compliant if needed. The positioning of glazing would enable maximum solar gain with a large roof overhang to prevent overheating.
- 2.15 All surfaces would be permeable throughout the site. A sewerage treatment plant is proposed, and further details can be provided by way of a condition.
- 2.16 There will also be provision for electronic car-charging points for vehicles as stipulated under the current Building Regulations.

3 Landscape Character and Settlement Separation

- 3.1 Refusal reasons 1 and 2 assert that the introduction of a residential use would urbanise agricultural/ paddock land, eroding the physical and visual separation between Semington and Berryfield contrary to policies 18 and 19 of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2 and Core Policy 51 of the WCS.
- The appellants contests that this assessment overstates the wider landscape impact of a single, well screened dwelling with a sedum roof and local materials. The site consists of a small, self-contained field parcel bounded by established hedgerows on three sides. The architectural layout directly mitigates wider visual prominence through its low-profile, single-storey scale, which limits its visibility and ensures it is not unduly dominant within the flat topography of the site.
- 3.2 Rather than causing widespread urbanisation or settlement coalescence, the scheme implements a comprehensive landscape-led approach that protects key features. The existing boundary hedgerows are retained, and a mature Ash tree on the Eastern boundary is fully protected. The visual modification will be overwhelmingly localised to the immediate access point and will naturally assimilate over time through the proposed native landscaping and wildflower planting zones.
- The spatial gap between Semington and Berryfield remains entirely uncompromised.

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- 3.3 The site sits between the development limits of Semington which is classed as a Large Village and Melksham and Bowerhill (Berryfield) Village which is also classed as a Principal Employment area under CS-CP35 of the Wiltshire local plan.
Figure 5 shows an extract from the Wiltshire local plan map

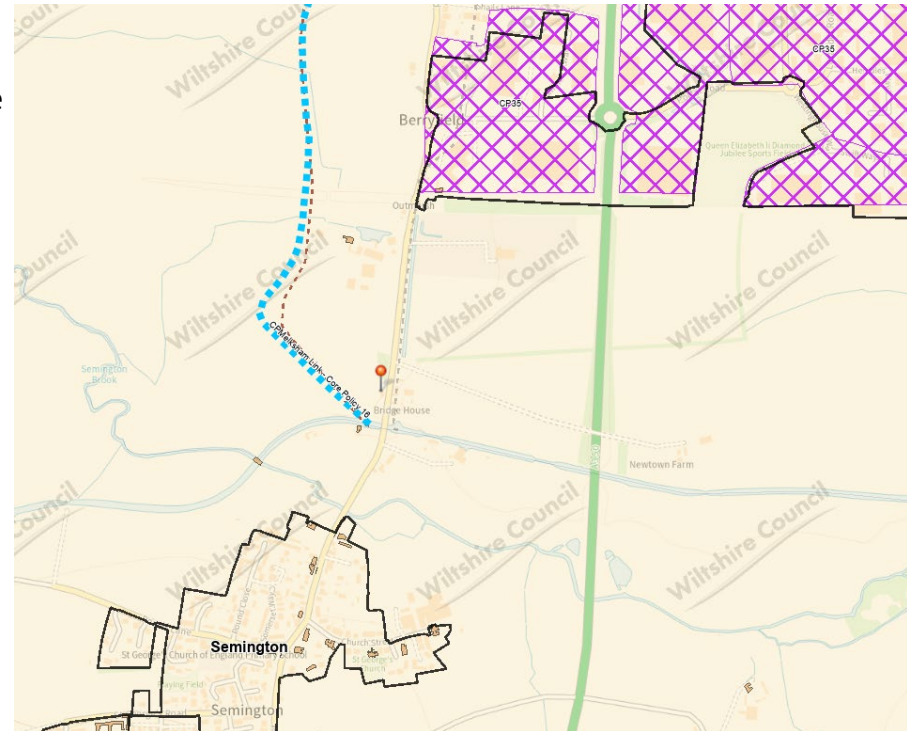


Fig 5 – Wiltshire local plan extract.

- 3.4 Whilst the proposals sit between Semington and Berryfield, the scale and design of this single dwelling would limit its visual impact since it's single storey and it sits behind established hedgerows on all sides so would be barely visible from any direction. The case officer also states in their report that the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of design quality and its immediate impact on the character and appearance of the area. While the development would introduce built form into an undeveloped parcel of land, the scale and form of the dwelling would limit its visual impact and would not, in isolation, justify a refusal of planning permission solely on design grounds.

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4 Planning Policy

4.1 Planning Policy:

The site lies within the administrative area of Wiltshire Council, and the Wiltshire Core Strategy (Adopted January 2015) remains relevant for this area insofar as it is up to date. The site has been subject to two previous applications. One of which 16/06564/OUT was refused on the grounds of unsustainable form of development which would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. Which this application sets to rectify.

Since the Council currently faces a significant Housing Land Supply Deficit (Approx. 2.8 years), these policies should be interpreted through the “tilted balance” of the NPPF, which gives greater weight to sustainable delivery as outlined in Section 2 above.

The following policies of the WCS are relevant to the determination of this application:

CP1 – Settlement Strategy & CP2 – Delivery Strategy:

Whilst these policies generally restrict development outside of “large Village” boundaries like Semington. This site is physically adjacent to the existing built form of the Canal Bridge residential cluster.

It can be argued that the site represents logical “rounding off” of the settlement rather than an isolated encroachment into open countryside.

CP51 – Landscape:

The low impact design of a single-storey dwelling in natural materials directly benefits from CP51 by minimising the “Zone of Visual Influence”

The retention of all boundary hedgerows and the 12m root protection zone for the Ash tree ensures that the development is embedded in the landscape rather than dominant over it.

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CP57 – Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping:

By following the site's naturally flat topography and proposing a single-storey dwelling, the design responds to the character of the area as required by the policy.

Sustainable features: It's proposed to include Solar PV, Air Source Heat Pumps, and a SuDS attenuation pond to align with the policy's requirements for climate change adaptation and sustainable construction.

CP60 – Sustainable Transport & CP61 – Transport and Development

The site is exceptionally well-placed near Cycle routes NCN Route 4 and 403 making it a “model site” for CP60's goal of promoting cycling.

The dedicated office space directly fulfils CP60's primary objective thus “reducing the need to travel”

Being within an 8-15 minute walk of the local amenities including Village Hall, School, & Public House proves that the site is sustainably located within “accessible limits” even if technically outside the village boundaries.

The site is also located on numerous Bus Routes including:

X34 (Faresaver) This is the village's most frequent service, running approximately every 20 to 30 minutes, It connects directly to Chippenham, Melksham, Trowbridge, and Frome.

49 (Stagecoach West) linking to Trowbridge, Devizes and Swindon.

272 (Faresaver) Connects Melksham, Devizes and Bath.

X84 & X85 (Faresaver) are specialist services providing connections to Bath via different routes.

Other possible Relevant Considerations (without limitation):

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance

The Countywide Parking Strategy (2013)

Wiltshire County Council Highways Development Control Standing Advice

5 Summary

- 5.1 The appellant refers the inspector to the Design and Access Statement which refers to nearby recent planning appeal decisions.
- 5.2 The appellant reserves the right to comment further once the LPA provide their own statement of case.
- 5.3 Should any significant changes come about from the NPPF the appellant reserves the right to comment upon that.
- 5.4 The appellant respectfully requests that the appeal be allowed as Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is triggered due to the lack of 5 year housing supply and given recent appeal decisions in this locality, this proposal should be looked upon favourable. This proposal will provide a much needed additional dwelling – but more importantly it will be discreet in the landscape, be of a high quality and level of energy efficiency, and enable living and working on the same site in an area where most services and facilities can be accessed easily on foot or via public transport.

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- 5.5 It is clear from the supplied images that the development will be low impact upon the character of the area and, effectively rounding off the edge of this enclave to the North of the village, would complement the prevailing pattern of development in this area of the village.



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Image 5. Artists impression of the proposed car-port and home office.

*Image 6 West
elevation
(Artistic
impression)*



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*Image 7. East
Elevation
(Artistic
impression)*



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Image 8. South Elevation
(Artistic impression)



Preliminary Revision - 06/07/2026

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Appendix 1:

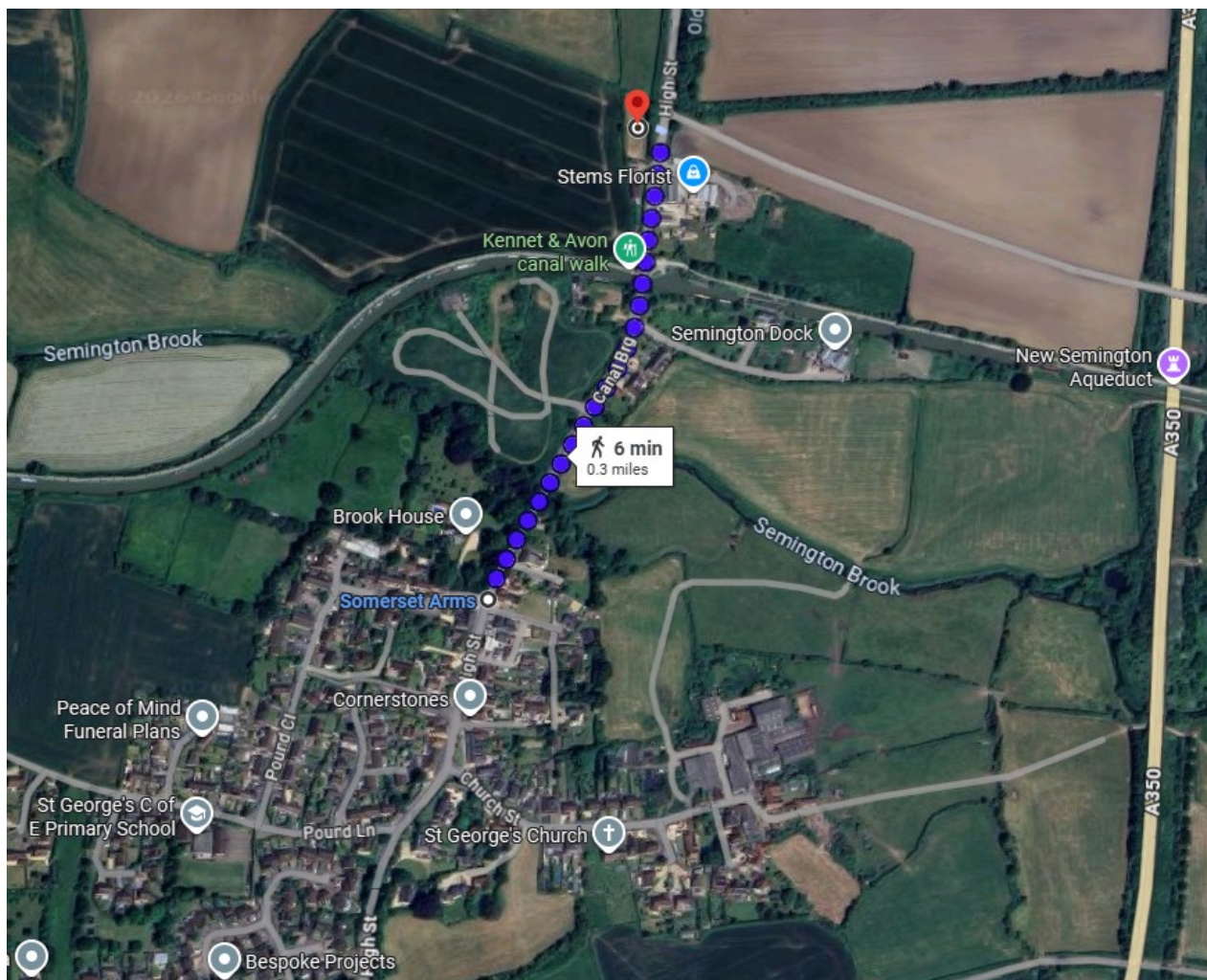


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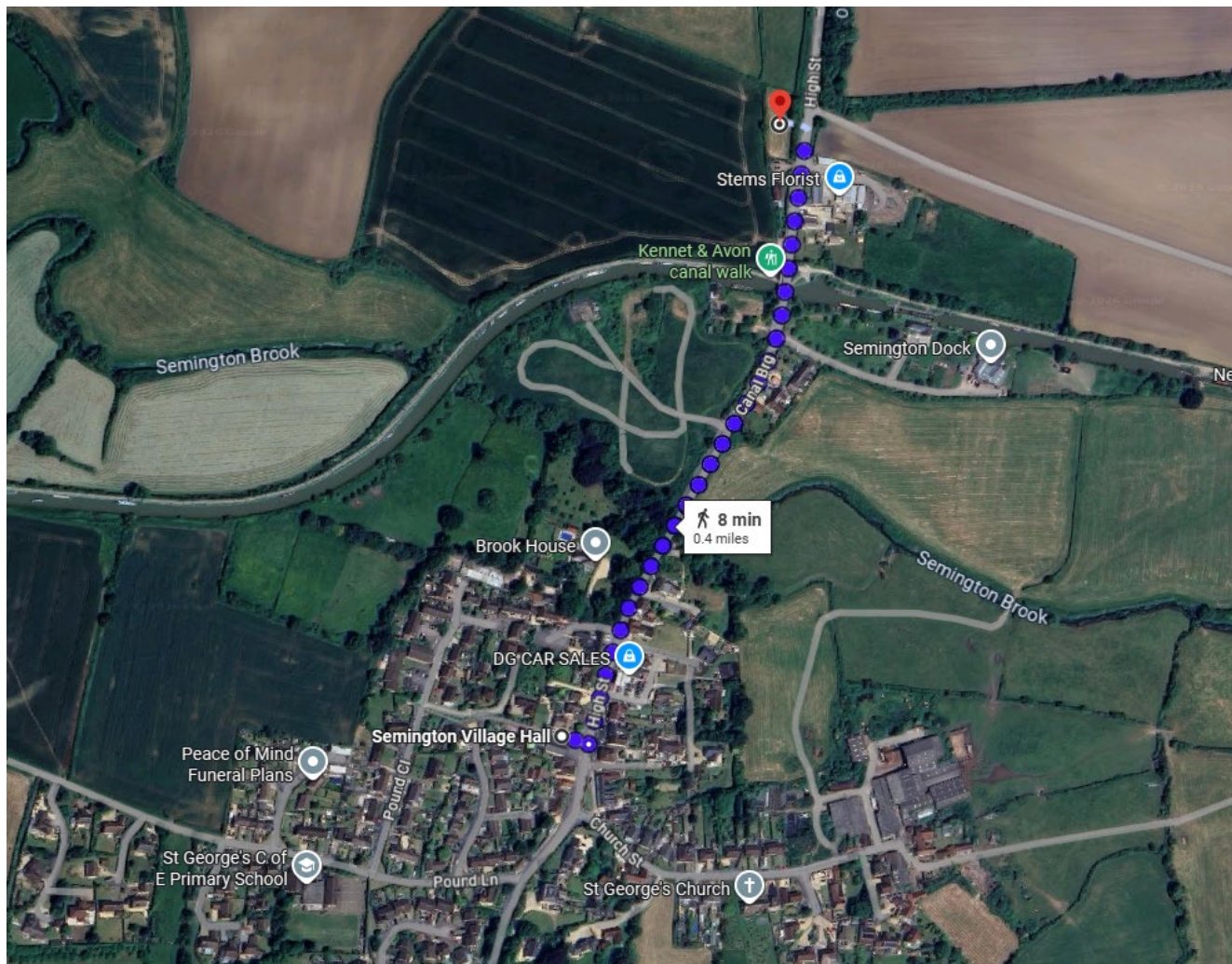
Appendix 2:



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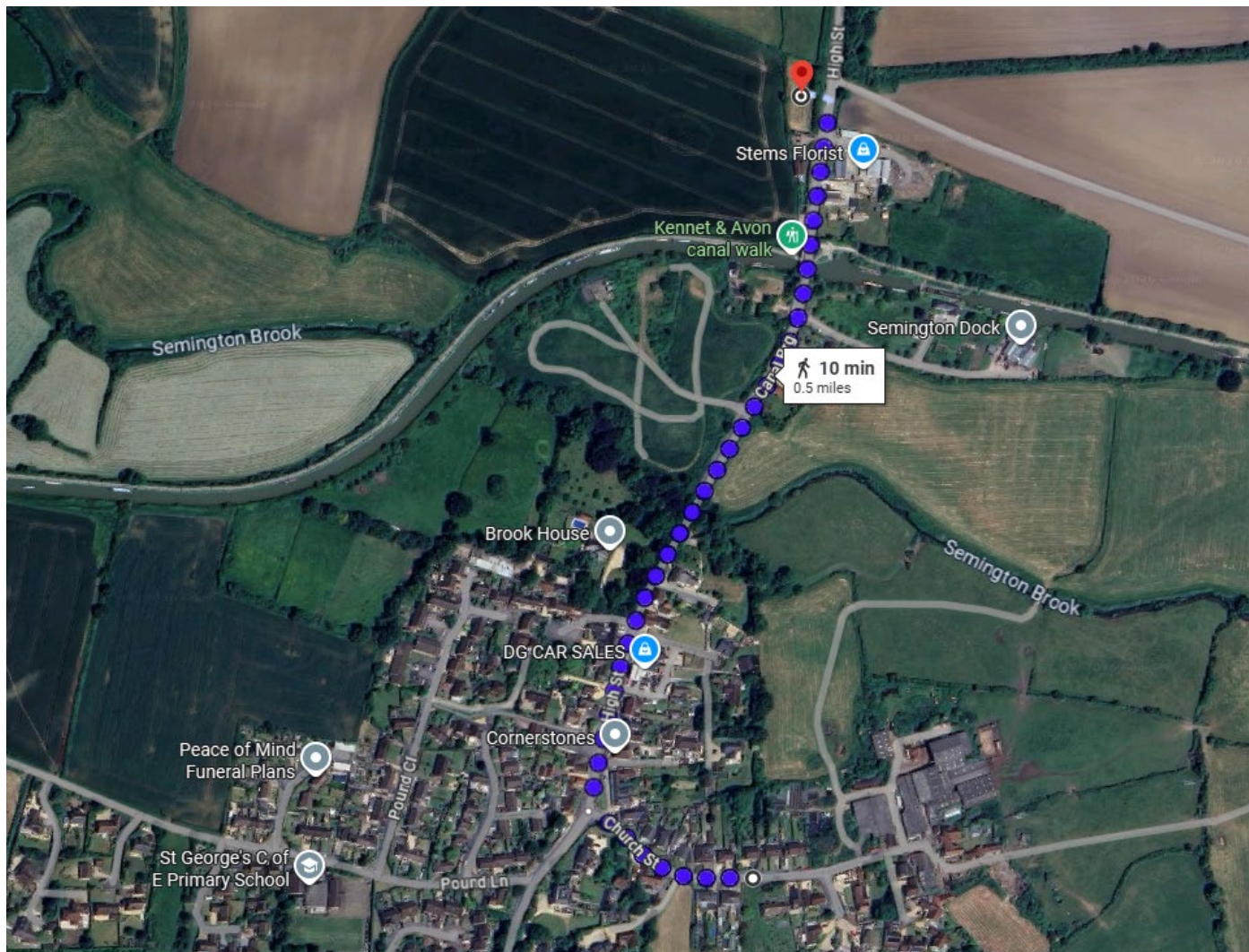
Appendix 3:



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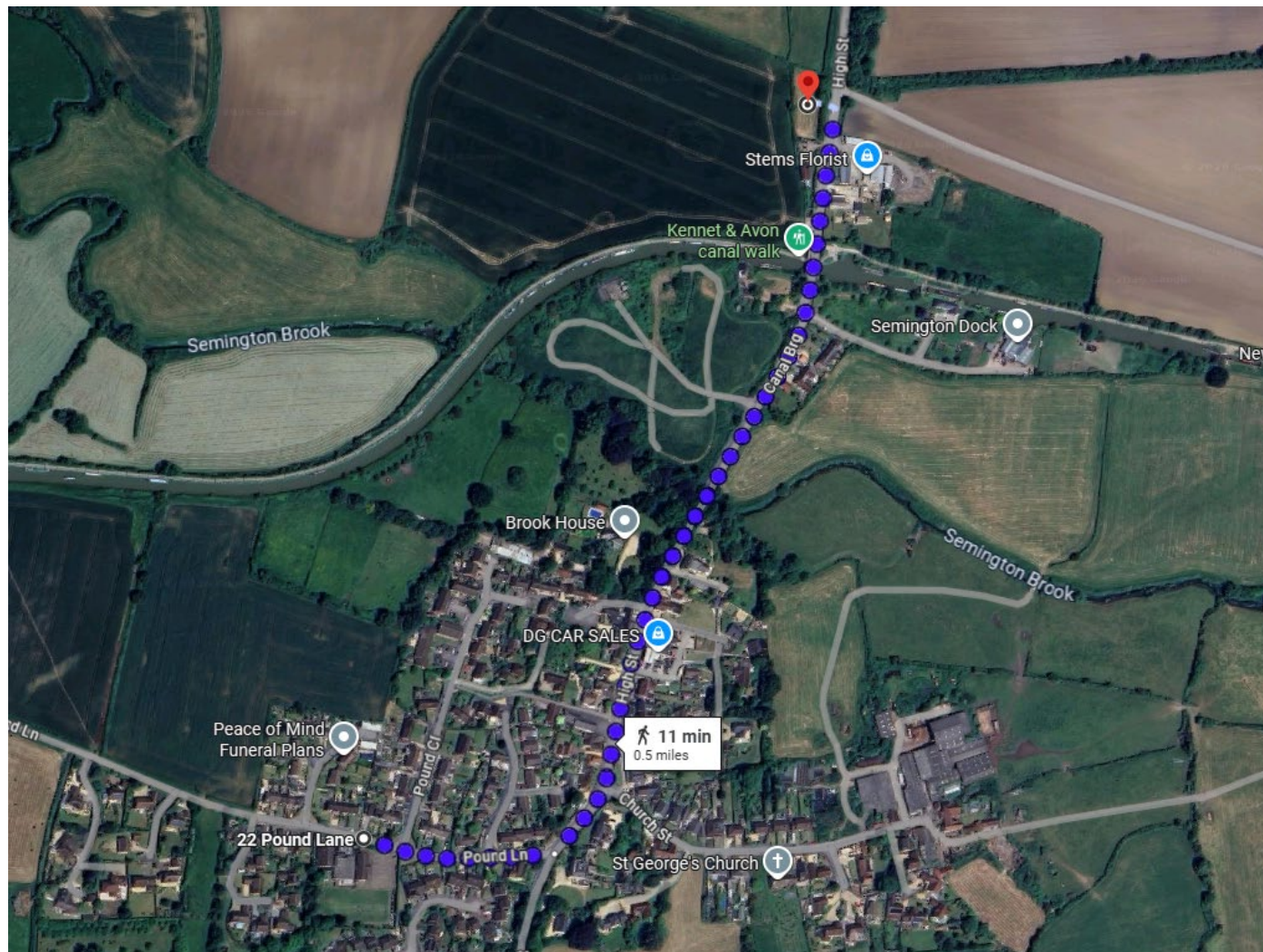
Appendix 4:



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Appendix 5:



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Appendix 7:

National Cycle Network (Public)



Walk Wheel Cycle Trust GIS
Private Organization ⓘ

Summary

Dataset of the National Cycle Network within the United Kingdom for use with GIS software (e.g. ArcGIS, QGIS). This dataset can be downloaded from our open data portal and is available on the Living Atlas. Walk Wheel Cycle Trust are the custodians of the National Cycle Network. Data is current and updated every Sunday.

View Full Details

Download

Details

**Dataset**
Feature Layer

**December 17, 2025 at 12:21:02 PM GMT**
Info Updated

**September 9, 2024 at 11:34:57 AM GMT+1**
Data Updated

**October 19, 2020 at 2:12:17 PM GMT+1**
Published Date

**Records: 37,171**
[View data table](#)

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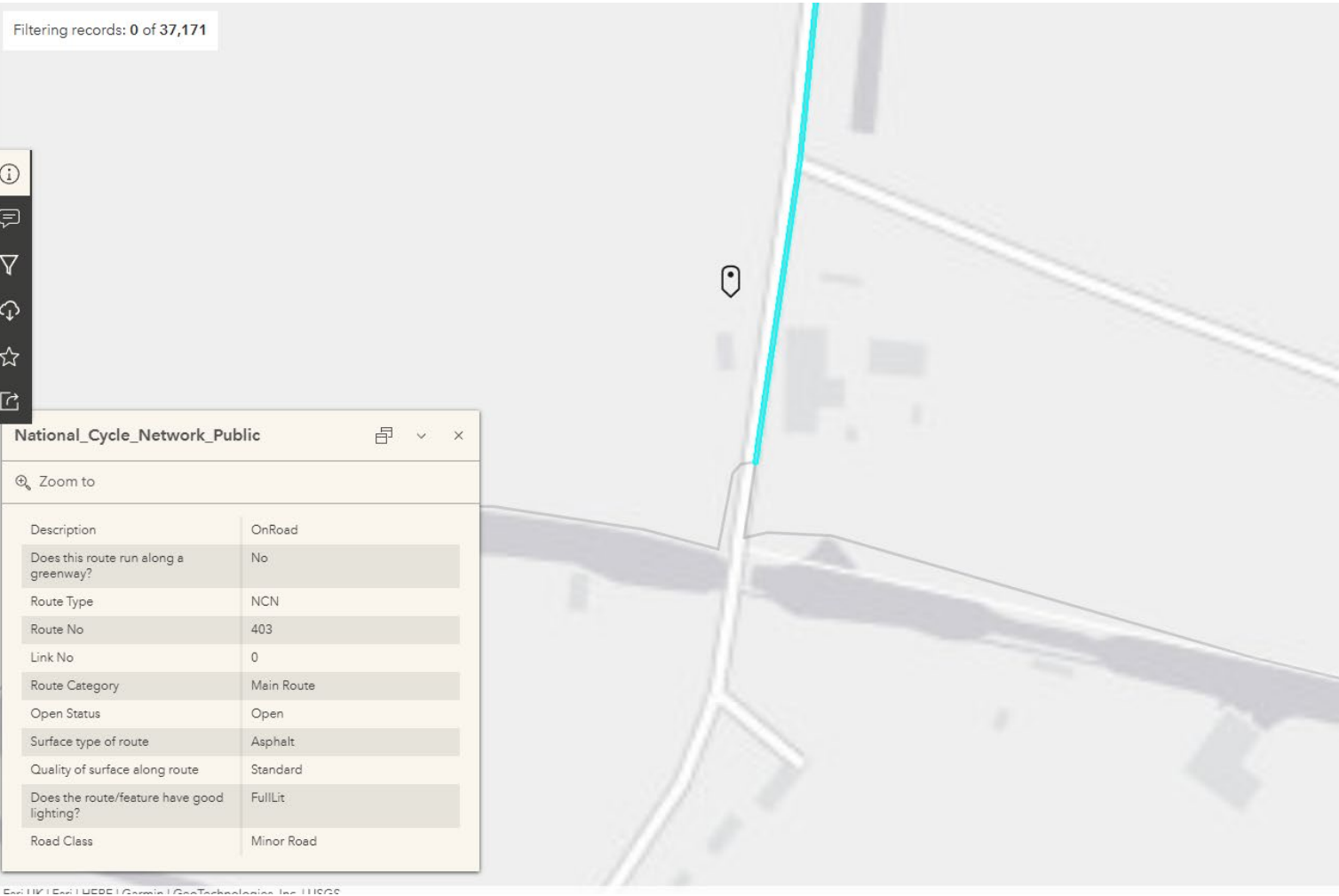
Filtering records: 0 of 37,171



National_Cycle_Network_Public

Zoom to

Description	OnRoad
Does this route run along a greenway?	No
Route Type	NCN
Route No	403
Link No	0
Route Category	Main Route
Open Status	Open
Surface type of route	Asphalt
Quality of surface along route	Standard
Does the route/feature have good lighting?	FullLit
Road Class	Minor Road



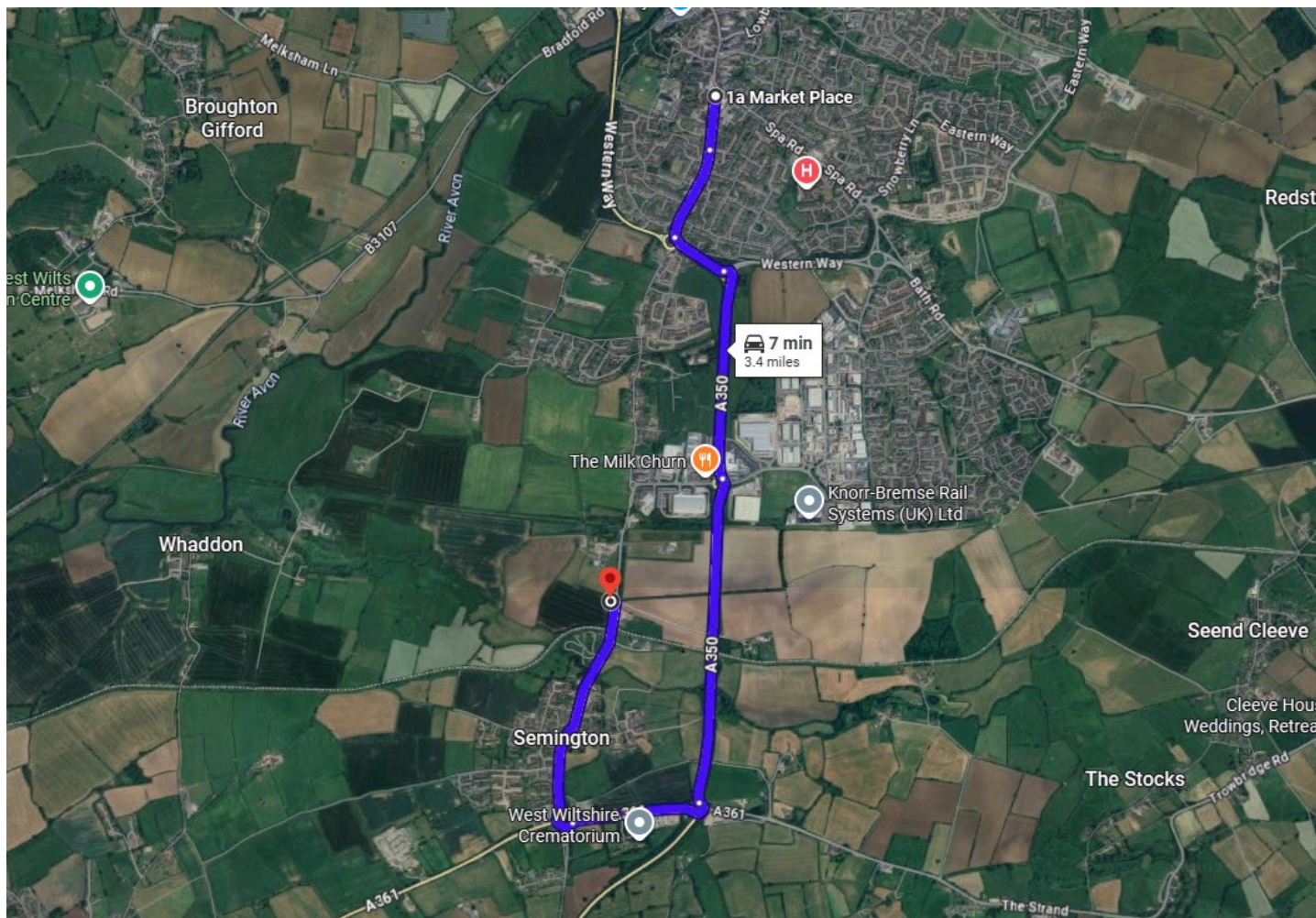
aba
design

Appendix 8:

Esri | UK | HERE | Garmin | GeoTechnologies, Inc. | USGS

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Appendix 9:



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Appendix 10:

