Conservation Register Handbook
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Introduction

‘Conservation of cultural heritage is now recognised as resting within the general field of environmental and cultural development. Sustainable management strategies for change which respect cultural heritage require the integration of conservation attitudes with contemporary economic and social goals...

‘The object of conservation is to prolong the life of cultural heritage and, if possible, to clarify the artistic and historical messages therein without the loss of authenticity and meaning. Conservation is a cultural, artistic, technical and craft activity based on humanistic and scientific studies and systematic research. Conservation must respect the cultural context.’

ICOMOS Guidelines for Education and Training in the Conservation of Monuments, Ensembles and Sites (1993). Compliance with these Guidelines is central to the success of an application. Applicants should clearly demonstrate that they understand and apply them in their decision-making.

The RIBA seeks to further the conservation, adaptation, restoration, protection and rehabilitation of monuments, buildings, groups of buildings and sites which, because of their architectural merit and/or historical significance, form part of the heritage of our built environment. It is RIBA policy to promote architectural conservation as an integral part of the practice of architecture, including an annual CPD requirement.

To assist clients in the selection of an architect to provide them with professional services in architectural conservation, the RIBA has developed a system to recognise two differing levels of specialist conservation expertise. However, the system does not claim to be the sole means of identifying conservation expertise within the profession.

There are two levels of accreditation: Specialist Conservation Architect (SCA) and Conservation Architect (CA).

There is also an entry level as a Conservation Registrant (CR) (see Appendix 1).

The RIBA encourages those at the entry CR level to progress through the levels by acquiring additional qualifications and experience. They can then apply for formal accreditation at CA and SCA levels.
Aims of the RIBA Conservation Register

The Register aims to:

– assist those commissioning works on heritage buildings to identify architects with the necessary knowledge, competence and experience
– strengthen the profession’s credibility and standing in the field of building conservation, repair and maintenance and encourage inter-disciplinary collaboration
– provide a focus and impetus for specialist CPD, and training, through an accessible and progressive system

Applicants in preparing their submissions are advised to carefully read this RIBA Conservation Register Handbook, including Appendix 5 (Guidance for the Conservation Assessment Panel).
The Register

The two-part Register caters for architects engaged in conservation work. There is an entry level, and two formal levels of professionally endorsed accredited status. Here, illustrating an understanding, application and working to the ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines is a crucial part of all applications. Individual decision-making according to these Guidelines should be explicitly stated in the way applications are formulated and presented for assessment. Compliance with the relevant section of the related Skills Matrix also guides that process.

Entry Level Register

Conservation Registrant (CR)
A Conservation Registrant has an awareness of the issues involved in working with historic buildings and has attended a conservation course approved by the RIBA.

Conservation Registrants can progress to the formal status of becoming a Conservation Architect and a Specialist Conservation Architect through submitting evidence of competencies to the peer review process as their experience and knowledge develops.

Being on the Formal Register

The RIBA Conservation Register is open to any ARB-registered architect who can demonstrate an understanding of conservation philosophy, and that they have the appropriate level of competencies in the fourteen specialist skill areas detailed in the ICOMOS Guidelines.

Non-RIBA applicants are also bound by the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct, in respect of which the professional conduct processes of the RIBA apply.

The two formal levels of accreditation are:

Conservation Architect (CA)
A Conservation Architect has in-depth knowledge and experience of working with historic buildings.

Specialist Conservation Architect (SCA)
A Specialist Conservation Architect has authoritative knowledge of conservation practice and extensive experience of working with historic buildings.

Being on the Formal Register is based on demonstrating compliance with the criteria in Appendices 1 and 4.

Guidance on application and accreditation evidence is given in Appendix 3.
Governance

The Register is managed by the Conservation Registrar who, advised by the RIBA Conservation Register Steering Group, reports to the RIBA Practice and Profession Committee.

Excluding members of the Steering Group a panel of assessors is appointed to carry out the assessment of applications.

Positions on the Assessment Panel are advertised with specific eligibility criteria (including experience and expertise to meet the SCA standard and experience of similar processes of peer assessment).

Two members of the Assessment Panel assess every CA and SCA application, with a wider group of assessors of up to 20 people discussing, moderating and endorsing the recommendation. An independent Moderator chairs the moderating session.

The assessors do not interview applicants; their assessment is made on the basis of the submitted accreditation evidence illustrating relevant competences and abilities of the individual applicant.

This is considered against the criteria established by the ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines (Appendix 2) and a guiding Skills Matrix (Appendix 4).

In the event of an appeal against the assessors’ decision, the Registrar will appoint different assessors from the Assessment Panel to consider the appeal whilst assessing the same submitted evidence.

It is important to note that members of the Assessment Panel are strictly independent and must declare a conflict of interest before reviewing applications. Any such stated conflict will be avoided in the allocation of applications for assessment.

Restored brickwork at The Roundhouse, Camden
Role of the Conservation Steering Group

The Chair of the Steering Group is appointed by the RIBA Practice and Profession Committee. The Chair makes nominations for the membership of the Steering Group, for approval by the RIBA Practice and Profession Committee. The Steering Group has not less than seven and not more than twelve members.

A majority of members of the Steering Group are persons with conservation experience and/or expertise.

The Steering Group should include at least one RIBA Council member and one member of the RIBA Conservation Group.

The task of the RIBA Conservation Steering Group is to advise on the operation of the Register.

It aims to ensure that the Assessment Panel carries out its work in a fair, transparent and rigorous manner, and that assessment criteria are applied to develop and maintain a high level of professional competence among architects on the RIBA Conservation Register.

It also liaises with the relevant bodies and other stakeholders to ensure that the Register meets the requirements of clients and that the two formal levels of accreditation criteria are appropriately maintained.

The Steering Group works with the Conservation Registrar to ensure that the administration and marketing of the Register is carried out efficiently and effectively.

Concert hall foyer, Barbican Arts Centre, City of London, refurbished by AHMM Architects in 2007
Equivalence

The Steering Group, with assistance from the Assessment Panel as required, will consider recognition of equivalence of other conservation accreditation schemes.

Fees

The RIBA charges an application fee to cover costs of assessment and re-accreditation and to cover the costs of producing the associated guidance material. There is also an annual registration fee to remain on the Register, to cover the running costs of the Register and RIBA provision of CPD/knowledge community support. An annual administration charge in addition to the normal fees is levied for non-RIBA members.

Any RIBA Chartered Member or ARB-registered architect may apply for accreditation. An applicant who can demonstrate through their accreditation evidence that they are able to meet the appropriate accreditation criteria is eligible for formal registration as Specialist Conservation Architect (SCA), or Conservation Architect (CA).

Successful applicants are entitled to use the relevant suffix, SCA or CA.

Details of fees are set out on the website at www.architecture.com
Appeals

An applicant who wishes to appeal against the decision of the assessors must do so within six weeks of the result being issued.

The applicant should state in writing that he/she wishes to appeal. There is no need to provide grounds for the appeal, or further evidence.

Appeals should be addressed to:

Conservation Registrar
Royal Institute of British Architects
66 Portland Place
London W1B 1AD

The appeal will be adjudicated by an independent pair of assessors appointed by the Registrar from the Assessment Panel. No assessor who took part in the original assessment shall be appointed to consider the appeal.

The new assessors will undertake an independent evaluation of the accreditation evidence originally submitted by the applicant.

The new assessors will submit their decision on the appeal, which will be final, to the Registrar.

Complaints

An applicant who wishes to make a complaint about the conduct of the assessment may do so through the RIBA complaints procedures.

Bargate stone wall at Tigbourne Court, Witley, Surrey
Appendix 1: Criteria for the Two Formal Levels of Conservation Accreditation

Specialist Conservation Architect (SCA)
A Specialist Conservation Architect has authoritative knowledge of conservation practice and extensive experience of working with historic buildings.

Conservation Architect (CA)
A Conservation Architect has in-depth knowledge and experience of working with historic buildings.

Accreditation evidence

Specialist Conservation Architect (SCA)

- Either
  - Five years’ relevant experience as demonstrated by the submission of five papers/reports/dossiers.*** Experience on at least one job should be within the last five years, and the majority of work should have taken place within the last ten years. See Appendix 5.
  - or
  - Completion of a Conservation Training Course;* and four years’ relevant experience as demonstrated by the submission of four papers/reports/dossiers.***

- and
- Commitment to using the ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines. Applicants must clearly demonstrate understanding and application of the Guidelines by providing a 300–500 word explicit summary of how the 14 aspects were considered and incorporated in their decision-making for each submitted dossier.

- Undertaking to act professionally in compliance with the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct.

- Submission of a detailed CV with due regard to the criteria set out in the SCA section of the Skills Matrix.

Conservation Architect (CA)

- Either
  - Four years’ relevant experience as demonstrated by submission of four papers/reports/dossiers.*** Experience on at least one job should be within the last five years, and the majority of work should have taken place within the last ten years. See Appendix 5.
  - or
  - Completion of a Conservation Training Course;* and three years’ relevant experience as demonstrated by the submission of five papers/reports/dossiers.***

- or
- Master’s degree or equivalent in Conservation;** and three years’ relevant experience as demonstrated by the submission of five papers/reports/dossiers.***

- and
- Commitment to using the ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines. Applicants must clearly demonstrate understanding and application of the Guidelines by providing a 300–500 word explicit summary of how the 14 aspects were considered and incorporated in their decision-making for each submitted dossier.

- Undertaking to act professionally in compliance with the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct.

- Submission of a detailed CV with due regard to the criteria set out in the CA section of the Skills Matrix.

Criteria for the Entry Level of Conservation Registrant

Conservation Registrant (CR)
A Conservation Registrant has an awareness of the issues involved in working with historic buildings and has attended a conservation course approved by the RIBA.

- A commitment to understanding and using the ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines.

- Undertaking to act professionally in compliance with the RIBA Code of Professional Conduct.

- Submission of a detailed CV with due regard to the criteria set out in the CR section of the Skills Matrix.

The Hoover Building, Perivale, London
**Conservation Training Course**
There are a number of potential routes to fulfilling this requirement:
– existing courses run by a range of organisations that fulfil the criteria listed below
– RIBA/RSUA/RSAW courses which meet the criteria

Working through the 5 units of the Understanding Conservation website (www.understandingconservation.org) may also be helpful.

**Criteria**
Courses are based on the ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines.

There is a minimum of 21 hours structured learning.

There is evidence that candidates have satisfactorily completed the course through the issue of a full Attendance Certificate which should be copied and included with the submission documentation.

**Master's degree or equivalent in Conservation**
In consultation with the Conservation Accreditation Steering Group, the Assessment Panel will give guidance on the Master's courses that satisfy this criterion.

**Papers/reports/dossiers**
Detailed guidance notes for applicants and assessors are provided in Appendix 3 (Guidance on application and accreditation evidence) to explain what is expected in a paper, report or dossier. In general these are to reflect the range of work areas a conservation architect undertakes and reveal their personal competence in effective decision-making.

The emphasis is on applicants being able to submit examples of, and reflect upon, what decisions they have made in the course of their professional work, rather than having to write significant new material.

It is important to note that the material submitted must be the applicant's own personal work, and be chosen to reveal their competences and abilities in appropriate decision-making within the ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines criteria.

Applicants may use one building for no more than two dossiers, to illustrate different aspects.
Appendix 2: ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines

The criteria for the assessment of evidence and accreditation are based on the ICOMOS 'Guidelines for Education and Training in the Conservation of Monuments, Ensembles and Sites' (1993) and the principle that conservation works should only be entrusted to persons competent in these activities. This competence demands the ability to:

a. read a monument, ensemble or site and identify its emotional, cultural and use significance;

b. understand the history and technology of monuments, ensembles or sites in order to define their identity, plan for their conservation, and interpret the results of this research;

c. understand the setting of a monument, ensemble or site, their contents and surroundings, in relation to other buildings, gardens or landscapes;

d. find and absorb all available sources of information relevant to the monument, ensemble or site being studied;

e. understand and analyze the behaviour of monuments, ensembles and sites as complex systems;

f. diagnose intrinsic and extrinsic causes of decay as a basis for appropriate action;

g. inspect and make reports intelligible to non-specialist readers of monuments, ensembles or sites, illustrated by graphic means such as sketches and photographs;

h. know, understand and apply UNESCO conventions and recommendations, and ICOMOS and other recognized Charters, regulations and guidelines;

i. make balanced judgements based on shared ethical principles, and accept responsibility for the long-term welfare of cultural heritage;

j. recognize when advice must be sought and define the areas of need of study by different specialists, e.g. wall paintings, sculpture and objects of artistic and historical value, and/or studies of materials and systems;

k. give expert advice on maintenance strategies, management policies and the policy framework for environmental protection and preservation of monuments and their contents, and sites;

l. document works executed and make same accessible;

m. work in multi-disciplinary groups using sound methods;

n. work with inhabitants, administrators and planners to resolve conflicts and to develop conservation strategies appropriate to local needs, abilities and resources.

Top Detail of egg and dart cornice
Above Terraced housing in Beverley, East Yorkshire
Appendix 3:
Guidance on SCA and CA applications and accreditation evidence

Note: The criteria for Conservation Registrant (CR) applications are outlined in Appendix 1.

Accreditation evidence
The accreditation evidence required for the two levels – Specialist Conservation Architect (SCA) and Conservation Architect (CA).

Criteria for accreditation
The criteria for the assessment of evidence and accreditation are based on the ICOMOS ‘Guidelines for Education and Training in the Conservation of Monuments, Ensembles and Sites’ and the principle that conservation works should only be entrusted to persons competent in these activities (see Appendix 2).

Detailed CV
Your CV should be detailed (to a maximum of four A4 pages), with a clear relationship to the SCA and CA criteria in the Skills Matrix. Its focus should be on conservation, and include a list of projects with conservation content. This can include all aspects of conservation practice including academic studies, surveys, reports and practical works. This list should include building type, date, listing status if any, project start and completion dates, and indicate clearly the phases of the project in which you were specifically involved and your role and areas of responsibility within the project.

It should be a chronological guide to your career, detailing your architectural education and the practices where you have worked.

Papers, reports and dossiers
For architects who are employed in the public sector, as academics or in advisory roles, and whose work does not involve built works, the submission of academic research papers or advisory conservation reports, with relevant extracts thereof up to a maximum of 12 A4 pages per paper/report/dossier, on heritage structures or on proposed works to heritage structures will be admissible evidence.

A paper may relate to any topic within the field of architectural or building conservation, must be substantial in content and must have been published in a refereed journal or other publication subject to scholarly peer review.

A relevant report or extract of may relate to an entire building, to an assembly of buildings, or to an aspect or part of a building or its curtilage, and might take any of the following forms:
- an assessment of its significance and/or architectural value
- a condition report on the conservation aspects
- a more detailed assessment, including historical analysis
- a report on the steps required to ensure its survival
- a report on the impact of any proposed interventions or change of use
- a report prepared for submission with a planning application or any combination of these.

An essential characteristic of the submitted evidence is that it involves the expression of professional judgement in the form of conclusions, opinion, advice or proposals. For example, an inventory or survey of the building would not, on its own, constitute a conservation report.

For architects working in private conservation practice, applications for accreditation categories where papers, reports or dossiers are required must include at least three dossiers.

The purpose of the dossier is to demonstrate that you have the necessary skills for the successful administration of a project involving works to a heritage or protected structure.

It is important to note that work on a listed building or historic building does not of itself provide evidence of conservation expertise. For example, extensive ‘refurbishment’ to render a building suitable for re-use or insertion of a contemporary intervention, without evidence of appraisal as to the appropriateness of this strategy, would not suffice.

The majority of experiential evidence must be post-qualification.

The evidence submitted must show how you exercised your responsibility for analysis of the building and decisions on the conservation approach to be taken.
Your dossier should present, in an economical fashion, a personal account of the steps you have taken when involved in the work, problems encountered and significant decisions taken. Obviously this could vary, but might be expected to include relevant historical research, condition report, analysis and proposals. The historical research should be sufficient to demonstrate the significance of what has been studied, the analysis and basis for the conservation approach adopted.

This could be followed by a record of the personal decisions that were taken, how the works actually carried out related to the works originally proposed and how any changes were recorded. The successful dossier will demonstrate exemplary application of conservation principles in the adopted approach clearly described against the relevant ICOMOS Guidelines.

The dossier must include a succinct summary assessment (between 300–500 words per project) of the effectiveness of your role in the conservation decision-making process. In this regard, any failure of the client to act on your advice will not prejudice the application for accreditation.

Apart from the summary assessment, it should be possible to construct your dossier by assembling a limited but considered selection of existing documents from the job file. For example, any reports (or extracts from them) prepared during the course of the work can be included in your dossier. Any documents created by your own hand should be limited to those of major importance to your dossier and if reduced to A4 should still be legible.

You should include only relevant material in assembling your dossiers, as extraneous material is unhelpful to the assessment process. A maximum of 12 A4 pages per paper/report/dossier is recommended as being necessary to summarise sufficient information.

Applicants relying extensively on the advice of conservation experts are unlikely to achieve accreditation as Specialist Conservation Architect (SCA).

The dossier must include a succinct summary assessment (between 300–500 words per project) of the effectiveness of your role in the conservation decision-making process. In this regard, any failure of the client to act on your advice will not prejudice the application for accreditation.

Conservation reports or dossiers will be assessed by the Assessment Panel in terms of the standards of conservation practice obtaining at the time the work was carried out, under the overall remit of the 14 ICOMOS Guidelines.

The best submissions will be those from applicants who clearly understand the meaning of conservation, have appropriate experience over the required period of time and who, through the documentation submitted, demonstrate that experience in a way that makes clear the basis for the conservation judgements arrived at.

The criteria for accreditation at either SCA or CA level requires evidence of your experience appropriate to that level. Within that context the quality of the conservation intervention/judgement displayed in the documentation is the critical question that needs to be addressed. Assessors should not be placed in the position of having to interpret the submitted evidence on your behalf.

You are advised to keep a copy of all documentation included in your submissions.
Format
The front cover of the paper, report or dossier should show clearly:

– your name
– article/project/building name
– paper/report/dossier number

Three hard copies of the papers/reports/dossiers should be provided.

Contents
Matters that must be covered in a conservation report or dossier include:

– status/importance of the building
– nature and purpose of the report/project
– your job title and role; documentary evidence of this role must be provided (with regard to the relevant SCA or CA skills matrix).
– project team make-up, respective responsibilities and method of working
– critical analysis of of personal documentation
– the basis for conservation judgements made; if work involves design interventions to a historic building you must explicitly address the issue of the appropriateness of the intervention
– a summary assessment of your role in the project, outcome relative to actions proposed, etc.
– which relevant ICOMOS guidelines have been met
## Appendix 4: Skills matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Standard of work</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Coping with complexity</th>
<th>Perception of context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialist Conservation Architect</strong> (SCA) <strong>Expert</strong></td>
<td>Very substantial personal autonomy</td>
<td>Authoritative knowledge of conservation practice, principles and philosophy and contributor to debate on development</td>
<td>Excellence achieved with relative ease and consistency</td>
<td>Able to contribute to development of standards, practice, principles and philosophy of conservation</td>
<td>Holistic grasp of complex situations moves between intuitive and analytical approaches with ease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservation Architect</strong> (CA) <strong>Skilled/proficient</strong></td>
<td>Possesses requisite knowledge and skills to perform effectively</td>
<td>Depth of understanding of conservation practice, principles and philosophy</td>
<td>Competent delivery of services achieved routinely</td>
<td>Able to take full responsibility for own work</td>
<td>Deals with complex situations holistically with confident decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservation Registrant</strong> (CR) <strong>Aware</strong></td>
<td>Possesses basic knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Good working and background knowledge of key aspects of conservation practice, principles and philosophy</td>
<td>Straightforward tasks undertaken competently within guidance and control systems</td>
<td>Able to achieve straightforward tasks using own judgement but understand when guidance/supervision required</td>
<td>Appreciates levels of complexity through analysis, consequent skills and experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Dreyfus model of skills acquisition (1981 and 1984 for PACR)
Appendix 5: Guidance for the Conservation Assessment Panel

Accreditation criteria

The criteria for accreditation are based on the ICOMOS ‘Guidelines for Education and Training in the Conservation of Monuments, Ensembles and Sites’ and the principle that conservation works should only be entrusted to persons competent in these activities.

Evaluation

Please see Appendix 1 for the basic requirements for accreditation at Specialist Conservation Architect (SCA) and Conservation Architect (CA) levels.

Evaluation will be based on reasonable and objective standards related to the range of skills necessary to carry out the services involved. Demonstration of relevant experience should include evidence of conservation-led practice. ‘Conservation-led practice’ means work on older buildings in which conservation principles have been carefully considered in arriving at the appropriate professional judgements.

Accreditation at a particular level requires evidence of experience of buildings appropriate to that level. Within that context the quality of the conservation intervention/ judgement displayed in the documentation is the critical question to be addressed.

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate an appreciation of and application of conservation principles to the project, including having sought expert advice when appropriate.

The conservation principles on which evaluation will be based are those set out in international charters (for example, the Venice Charter, 1964; the Washington Charter, 1987; the Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994; the Burra Charter, 1999).

Procedures

Evaluation will be based on the following:

– academic qualifications or successful completion of a conservation training course
– experience
– publications
– research

The evaluation will be based solely on the evidence provided. Personal knowledge of assessors will not be drawn on to fill gaps in the information provided by an applicant, as to do so would discriminate against applicants not known to the assessor.

Where the evidence provided is insufficient to allow the assessors to reach a decision the application will not be processed further and the applicant will be so informed.

On completion of assessments, the assessors will meet with the other pairs of assessors working in the assessment round, in order to review and moderate the assessments.

The Assessment Panel will record in writing in each case the reasons mapped against the accreditation criteria for deciding that accreditation should be granted or refused.

In the case of refusal, the applicant will be sent a copy of the Assessment Panel’s reason/s for its decision.

The independent Assessment Panel Chair will carry out the following duties:

– Chair and conclude the moderation process.
– Ensure that assessors’ decisions and the reason for these are recorded on each Application Summary Sheet.
– Ensure that a summary sheet recording the final decisions of the assessors in relation to all applications submitted is signed by the relevant assessors.
– Return all documentation to the Conservation Registrar.

All business in relation to the application process will be conducted in strict confidence.
Appendix 6: Re-accreditation

All successful applications are valid for five years.

The purpose of the re-accreditation process is to give clients and statutory bodies assurance that SCA and CA accredited architects are current in their understanding of conservation philosophy, policy and practice. The RIBA is keen that the re-accreditation process should be of benefit to the continuing personal and professional development of members and on re-accreditation submissions only the annual 12 hours of related conservation CPD should be given (not the entire CPD record).

Re-accreditation of Specialist Conservation Architects (SCA) and Conservation Architects (CA) is by:

1) Submission of details of specialist conservation CPD undertaken in the previous five years. At least 12 of the required 35 hours a year should be spent on conservation, with at least half to be structured – i.e. attendance at relevant courses or seminars.

2) The submission of a case study of a relevant conservation work you have been personally involved in within the previous five years; this could include a research study. The case study will need to demonstrate current competency in accordance with ICOMOS Guidelines, and is the equivalent of a dossier as submitted on initial application. Applicants must clearly demonstrate in this dossier their understanding and application of the Guidelines by providing a 300–500 word explicit summary of how the 14 aspects were considered and incorporated in their decision-making. The dossier will be formally reviewed by the Assessment Panel, and no interviews will take place.

3) The Assessment Panel may ask for additional information to demonstrate currency.

The Assessment Panel will review each submission, and offer:

Re-accreditation or Deferment with request for additional specialist CPD and re-accreditation following satisfactory response.

A CA architect on the RIBA Conservation Register may apply at any time for accreditation at the higher SCA level, but must submit new relevant accreditation evidence and pay the appropriate application fee.

Those in the CR entry level are strongly encouraged to formally apply for CA recognition with their appropriate evidence.

Please note that CPD required in the application and re-accreditation processes counts as part of the annual CPD requirement.

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