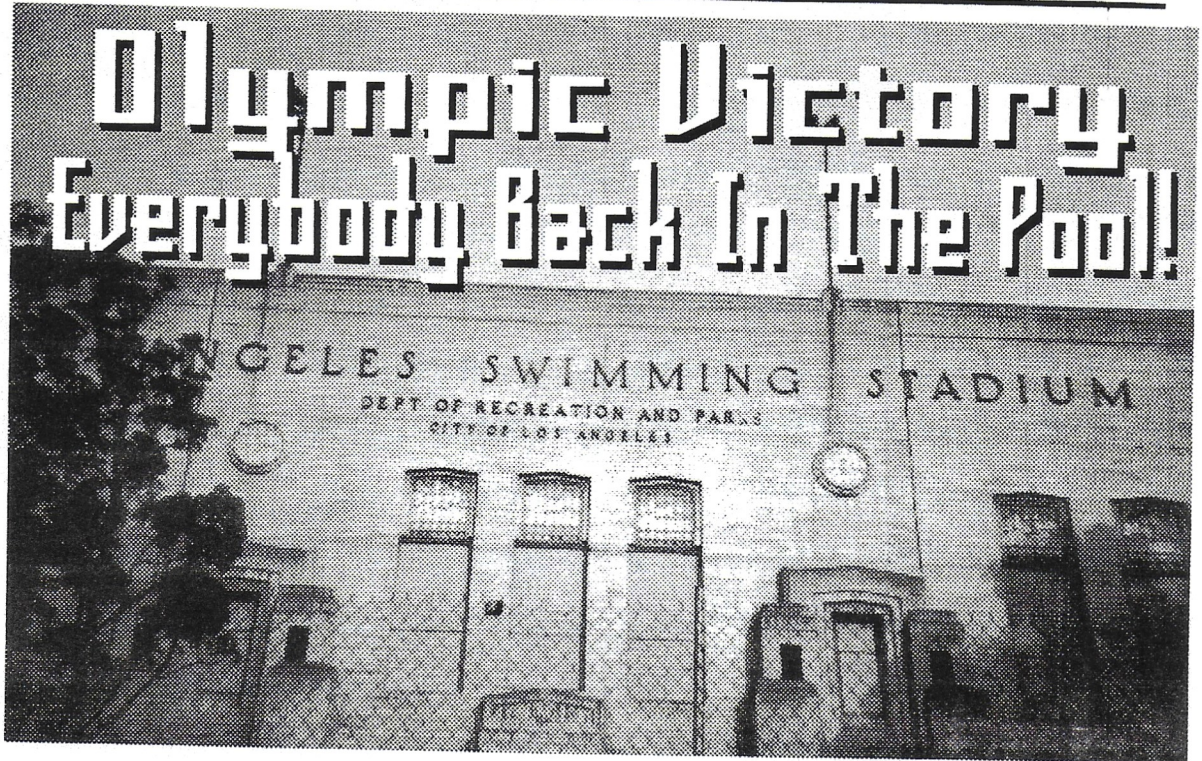
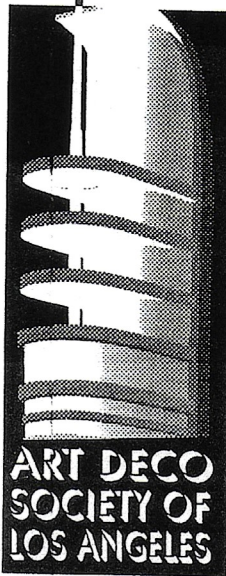


THE EXPOSITION

The Newsletter of THE ART DECO SOCIETY of Los Angeles

MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF ART DECO SOCIETIES

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 4



Two issues ago (vol. 10, #2) we reported on the continuing story of the 1932 Olympic Swim Stadium in Exposition Park. That story explained the project impacts and alternatives and the conclusions which were drawn in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This story is one which has a reasonably happy ending, one which we feel brings the preservation efforts of the Art Deco Society to a successful year—and millennium—end.

As is usually the case when preservation is political (and when isn't it) the Final EIR was issued very rapidly and rushed to a hearing at the Community Redevelopment Agency. At that hearing, representatives of several other organizations spoke in opposition of the proposed project, citing not only the structure's historic and architectural significance, it's contribution to the National Register Historic District, but also unresolved programmatic issues.

Despite verbal and written objections, to no one's surprise, the project was approved by the CRA as it was originally submitted, without consideration of the objections and suggestions, without changing so much as a comma. This, as any preservation veteran knows, is par for the course.

Fortunately, many of the people involved were interested in the historic aspect of the Swim Stadium and heard our arguments—which did not call for

no-project hands-off, merely an alternative, more sensitive approach. To its discredit, the Los Angeles Conservancy "signed off" on the project as proposed, stating that they did not see any problem with either the new addition or the problems it would cause to the District. It was left to the Art Deco Society and the North University Park Community Association to stand firm and try to negotiate the fate of the Stadium.

The project is being funded by the Weingart Foundation and we found a reasonable figure in Roy Anderson, Chairman of the Board, as well as that of their attorney, William Delvac, who is well known in preservation circles for his advocacy. They agreed to meet with us to discuss how we might reach a compromise which would embrace the historic aspects and still allow the project to go forward. In a series of meetings, during which we also met with the architects and reviewed the actual plans (something which was not made available during the EIR process). In the end, we all felt that our goals had been met and that the project was in fact more effective than it had been. Although this could have been accomplished during the EIR process, political and personal agendas seem to

have forced everyone into adversarial positions before they were able to meet halfway.

The terms were agreed to by the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), City of Los Angeles, Exposition Park Intergenerational Community Center (EPICC—set up by Weingart to administer the funding), North University Park Community Association, Adams Dockweiler Heritage Organizing Committee and the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles and are as follows:

1. Any future projects or plans which could affect the Swim Stadium, the Exposition Park Clubhouse or the project itself shall be referred to the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission for comment.

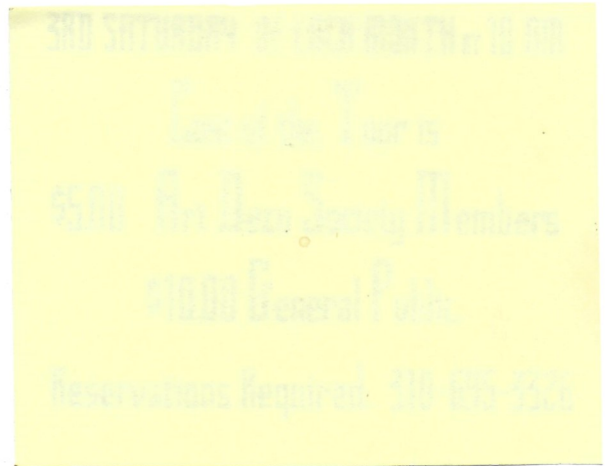
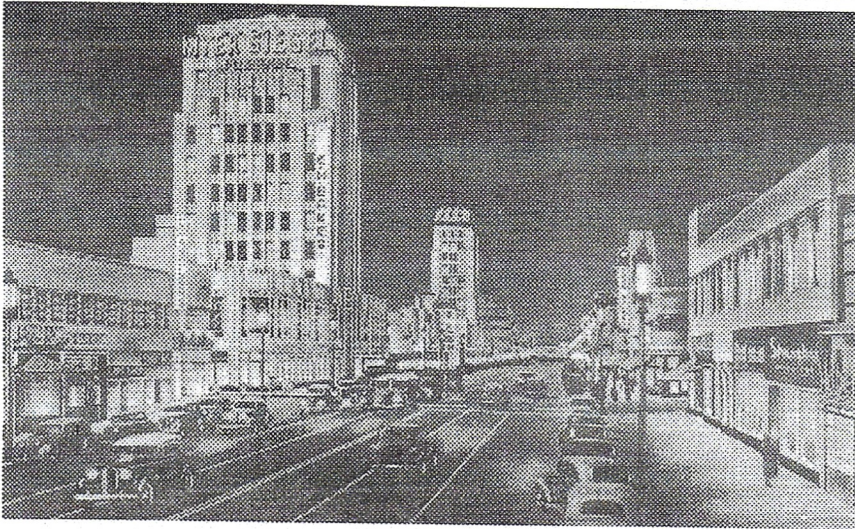
2. The historic features and portions of the Swim Stadium and the Clubhouse shall be taken into account in planning, physical programming, staffing, operations, and maintenance decisions and activities.

3. Following completion of the project, the City (acting as the Department of Recreation and Parks) and EPICC shall attempt to cause the historic portions of the Stadium and Clubhouse to be or remain listed as a historic landmark.

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THE MIRACLE MILE A NEW WALKING TOUR

PRESENTED BY THE ART DECO SOCIETY OF LOS ANGELES



Comfortable Walking Shoes are Recommended.



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4. ADSLA, NUPCA and ADHOC shall be provided opportunity to review and comment on drafts of landmark nominations and be able to meet with the CRA and its consultants in connection with the preparation of nominations.

5. EPICC shall provide funding of \$10,000 to engage a qualified oral historian or historic preservation consultant to develop, establish and implement an oral history project related to the cultural, architectural and historic significance of the Stadium and Clubhouse. Preservationists shall select the consultant, subject to reasonable approval of EPICC and the CRA.

6. EPICC shall provide \$20,000 to engage a qualified education or historic preservation consultant to develop a curriculum to educate students about the history of the Stadium, Clubhouse and surrounding community. The curriculum will be offered to the L.A. Unified School District.

7. For not less than three years following the opening of the project, an annual community history education day will be presented. A volunteer docent program will be established to assist in visitor's understanding, awareness and enjoyment of the historic resources.

8. In addition to the Community Day, organizations shall be allowed to conduct tours of the Stadium and Clubhouse and use of a community room to conduct educational sessions or meetings related to the history and architecture.

9. Each of the organizations shall be provided a copy of the Historic American Buildings Survey which will be prepared as required in the EIR.

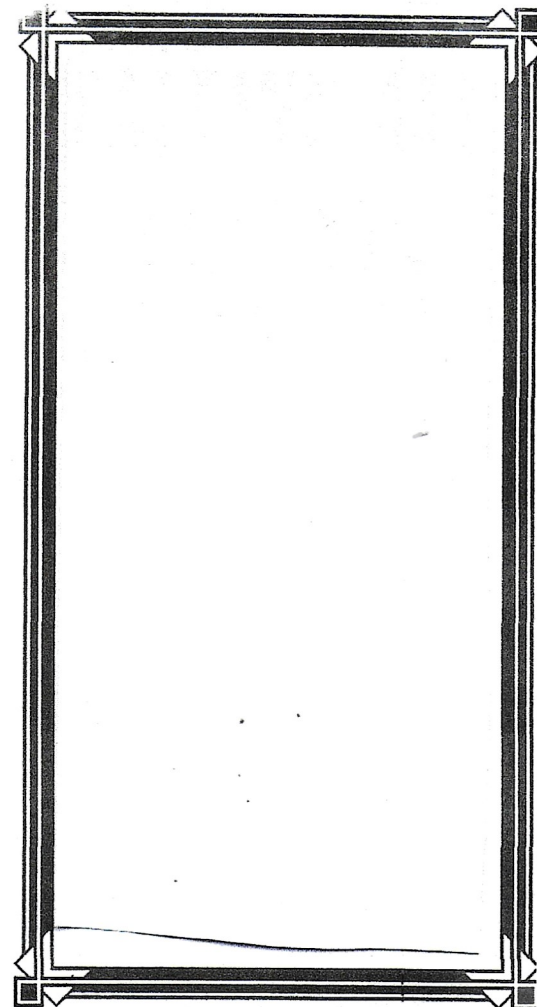
10. During the design process, neighbors and the organizations shall be consulted with regard to key design elements, treatment of historic fabric, height, color, materials, landscaping, etc.

11. The CRA shall consult with the State of California regarding the possibility of a conservation easement or other preservation covenant with respect to the historic features and portions of the Swim Stadium.

At press time we were informed by attorney William Delvac that all the agencies concerned have approved it and signing is imminent.

We feel we can call this a preservation success story. The essential fabric of the building will be retained and the educational components will enhance people's understanding and appreciation of this and other Art Deco buildings. There are many buildings in Los Angeles which are expendable—the Swim Stadium is not one of them. We only ask that those in decision-making positions acknowledge and heed the assessments and advice of the experts in these cases. We believe that reasonable people can come to reasonable conclusions. The Art Deco Society is not against development or social programs, nor do we believe that age is the only criterion for saving a building. But we are against arrogance and paternalism and irresponsibility. To

that end, we remain on guard and will continue to champion the legacy of the Art Deco era and fight for its recognition and respect.



NEWSLETTER



Number 169

January-February 2000

Preservationists Win Agreement in Exposition Park

The historic 1932 Olympic Swimming Stadium in Exposition Park, along with the entire park itself, have a better chance of being legally designated a National Register Historic District, thanks to a settlement agreement worked out by the North University Park Community Association (NUPCA), Adams Dockweiler Heritage Organizing Committee (A.D.H.O.C.), the regional Art Deco Society of Los Angeles, the Exposition Park Intergenerational Community Cen-

ter (EPICC), the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the City's Recreation and Parks Commission.

EPICC's planned community center, which is actually a major alteration and addition to the original stadium, will be constructed as proposed at the southwest quadrant of Exposition Park, but the settlement requires that the City and EPICC:

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A Magical Mansion

We are thrilled to be having our first WAHA meeting of the new Millennium, on Saturday evening, February 19, in one of the city's finest houses of the last Millennium.

Built in 1912 by a Los Angeles pioneer and the city's first elected health commissioner, the Dr. Grandville MacGowan residence is a L.A. City Historic Cultural Monument. Dr. Grandville was married to Lillie May Briggs, the granddaughter of Dr. Leonice Hoover (of Hoover Boulevard fame). The European-educated MacGowan hired architects

Frank Dale Hudson and William A. Munsell, designers of the Museum of Natural History in Exposition Park, to create what today is the largest extant mansion on Adams Boulevard. Lillie's widowed mother, Mary Hoover Briggs, never traveled far from their sides. The MacGowans erected a similarly-styled stucco-brick-and-timbered 5,600-square-foot Craftsman residence for Mary on what was then part of the same estate, though now the next-door manse, also a landmark, is owned by a separate party.

The 14,500-square-foot MacGowan Mansion is three stories high. The stucco-brick-and-timbered "Alpine" Craftsman-Tudoresque residence has a high bellcast gabled roof dominated by over-scaled carved corbels and decorative bargeboards, with triangular leaded glass windows over a triangular stone lintel above the driveway.

Entered through a carved outside vestibule with a stained mahogany vaulted ceiling, the mansion's inside vestibule, with carved plaster ceilings and ornate woodwork, is a hint of grander things to come. Next comes the ornately-carved staircase rising from the reception area. To one side is a mammoth, 1,500-square-foot wainscoted living room/ballroom, and on the other is the library, with a massive ochre-colored Gruby tile fireplace. The dining room of highly-polished mahogany has a peacock blue Gruby tile fireplace with a copper Art Nouveau hood.

Upstairs, the master suite offers three more fireplaces and two bathrooms. There are four additional bedroom suites on the second floor, and then a 3,500-square-foot third floor.

Last fall longtime WAHA members Janice Stevenor Dale, Scott Dale and their family moved into the MacGowan Mansion, and are now restoring this spectacular home.

Potluck: Watch your great food disappear! Bring a hearty winter main dish, or a scrumptious dessert

Exposition Park

Continued from page 1

* attempt to cause the remaining historic portions of the Swimming Stadium and the adjacent Exposition Park Clubhouse (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 127) to be or remain listed on the National Register, the California Register of Historical Resources and other landmark lists;

* to prepare and submit National Register and California Register nominations for the proposed Exposition Park Historic District (with required review by the preservation organizations);

* to engage a qualified oral historian or historic consultant to develop, establish and implement an oral history project related to the cultural, architectural and historic significance of the Swimming Stadium and the Exposition Park Clubhouse, with emphasis on the community recreational use of these facilities;

* to engage a qualified education or historic preservation consultant to develop a curriculum to educate students about the history of the Swimming Stadium, Exposition Park Clubhouse and the surrounding community;

* to offer an annual community history education day or similar program, free and open to the general public, and use best efforts to develop a volunteer docent program, to implement this education outreach; and

* to allow organizations to conduct tours of the Swimming Stadium and the Exposition Park Clubhouse and/or use a community room to conduct meetings related to the history of the stadium, the clubhouse, Exposition Park and the surrounding community or Art Deco architecture and other styles of architecture prevalent in the surrounding community.

The settlement was entered into in response to a threatened lawsuit by the three preservation organizations, who were concerned that the proposed alterations to the Swimming Stadium's Moderne facade and the changes to the interior spaces would cause significant impacts not just to the building's physical structure but to its heritage and the perceived heritage of Exposition Park.

Exposition Park was recognized as "Eligible" for listing as a National Register Historic District when the California Science Center and the governing organization of the park prepared a master plan and major Environmental Impact Report a decade ago. But although the "eligible" finding does provide protections to historic structures, and many of the buildings in Exposition Park, like the Memorial Coliseum and the Natural History Museum, that contribute to the proposed federal district are already individually designated as local or national landmarks, it's just simply not the same thing as finalizing a nomination and actually adding the district to the Register. Indeed, because a nomination was never written, consultants have speculated that the many physical changes occurring (such as the construction of the California Science Center, which retained only a bare portion of the

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Exposition Park Settlement

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original Ahmanson building) and/or proposed in the park might cause the District to, in effect, disappear before it was legalized. The preservationists who attended the recent round of hearings on the EPICC center expressed hope, however, that a National Register District for Exposition Park could be built on its history and significance over the century to the surrounding community — taking into account the cultural role the park has played in the lives of people — as well as its architecture; hence the push to do oral histories as part of the new survey and nomination.

Completed in 1932 for Los Angeles' hosting of the Summer Games of the Tenth Olympiad, the Swimming Stadium was a casualty of the 1994 Northridge Earthquake. The planned Intergenerational Community Center is largely funded through the Weingart Foundation, which raised \$28

million, in cooperation with the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks. The proposal calls for a senior center in the restored Exposition Park Clubhouse, a new childcare center, and a recreational expansion at the Swimming Stadium. Among the changes are that the old spectator bleachers will be removed, and a large roofing/shade structure and an amphitheater are being constructed.

The timing of this settlement is auspicious. 'Recent articles in the Los Angeles Times have reported that proposals are being developed with respect to the ...Natural History Museum,' observed WAHA member Jim Childs, secretary for NUPCA. Although one proposal for that Exposition Park institution's expansion called for the demolition of its west wing (a modern addition) and replacement with a larger, partially underground, structure, the recent news seems to be that museum officials and county officials, including West Adams' own elected county supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, are toying with the idea of tearing the entire building down. Or, abandoning it altogether and moving to another location. Neither option is palatable to local preservationists like Childs, who has requested that CRA and its Hoover Project Area Committee, which includes Exposition Park's geography, "outreach to the appropriate parties and establish a community forum on this issue as soon as possible."



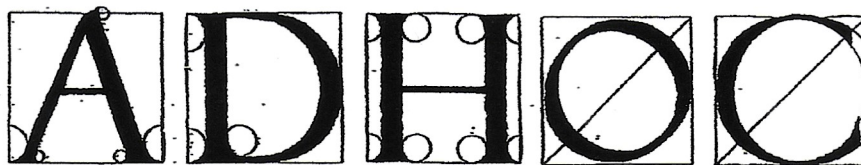
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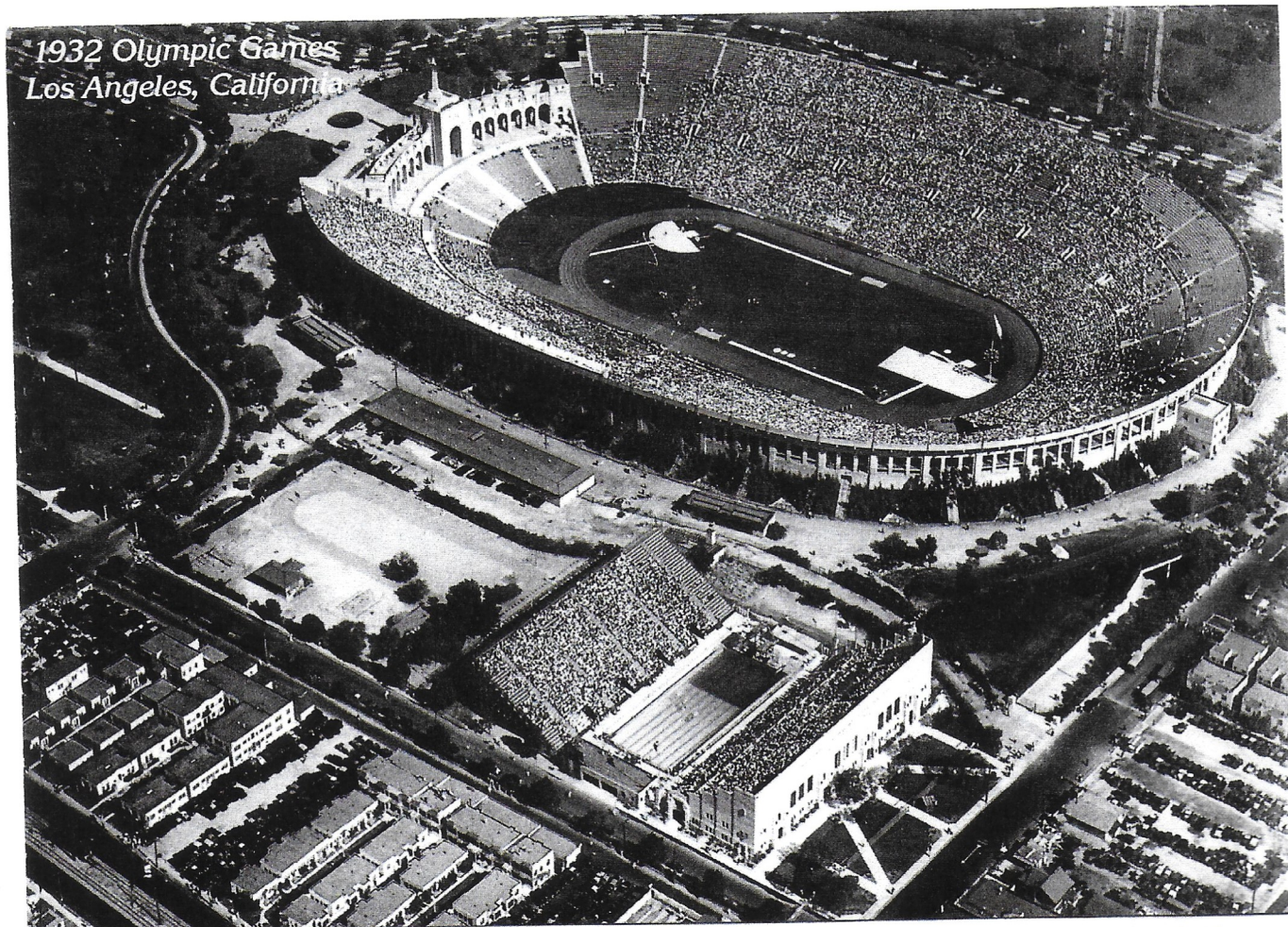
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ADAMS DOCKWEILER HERITAGE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE



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