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Conservation Management Plan

Australian Estates Wool Store

47-61 Sunshine Road, West Footscray

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Trethowan Heritage acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our studio and projects are located. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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CONTENTS

1	Introduction and Preliminaries	1
1.1	Purpose	1
1.2	Limitations of the Survey	1
1.3	Statutory Context	1
1.4	Conservation Approach	2
2	Site Details	4
2.1	Historical Understanding	4
2.2	Existing Description and Condition	5
3	Conservation Works and Management Measures	6
3.1	Schedule of Conservation Works	6
3.2	Management Measures	7
Appendix A	Elevation Markups	A-1
Appendix B	Cleaning Methodology - Brickwork	B-1
Appendix C	Graffiti Removal	C-3

1 Introduction and Preliminaries

1.1 Purpose

This Conservation Management Plan has been prepared for the Australian Estates Wool Store at 47-61 Sunshine Road, West Footscray (the subject site) and has been commissioned by Untitled Group P/L. The report has been prepared to accompany a planning permit application to the Minister for Planning for use of the subject site as a *Place of Assembly*. It is proposed to use the subject site for major events and smaller community, arts and cultural events.

Pre-application discussions have been undertaken with the Department of Transport and Planning. In relation to heritage matters, the following preliminary comments were provided by Maribyrnong City Council, dated 21 April 2026:

The subject building is an individually significant heritage building within a site-specific Heritage Overlay and remains in a state of disrepair. Council encourages the permit applicant to undertake repair works to the building facade to ensure that the significant fabric of the building is preserved. A Conservation Management Plan should be provided, which would include staging/timeframes for works to be undertaken. An investment in the upkeep of the building should be made by the permit holder given that they will take the benefit of the proposed use.

Given the planning permit application primarily relates to the use of land for place of assembly, where no works are proposed, to demolish or remove a building, or construct a building or carry out other building works, conservation works described herein represent essential maintenance and repairs for the venue to operate for the proposed land use. Further conservation management measures are outlined to prevent damage or further deterioration of the building.

1.2 Limitations of the Survey

The list of conservation works in the report is based on the findings of a site inspection carried out by Trethowan Heritage on 26 May 2026. All comments and observations of the external façade contained in this report are based on visual inspections, undertaken from the external ground level. No high-level or roof inspections were carried out.

1.3 Statutory Context

1.3.1 Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)

The subject site is not included on the VHR.

1.3.2 Maribyrnong Planning Scheme

The site is listed as an *individually significant* heritage property in the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme as Heritage Overlay HO160 Australian Estate's Wool Store. Under the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay, solar energy system controls apply; no other controls are applicable.

Statement of Significance

A citation and Statement of Significance (SoS) for the site has been produced as part of Maribyrnong Heritage Review in 2000, as follows (underlined for emphasis):

The Australian Estates wool store is of regional historical and architectural significance, as one of the largest single wool store buildings in Victoria built on a grand scale with considerable architectural refinement. It represents a peak of pastoral development when Australia rode on the sheep's back and the culmination of the architecturally elaborate wool store designs, subsequent stores becoming bland clear span and tilt-slab sheds. The location on the fringe of Melbourne and in proximity to the railway and the connecting siding demonstrates its dependence on transport connections.

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The wool industry has played a significant role in the development of Victoria and Australia, and wool stores have been one of the most prominent building types in Melbourne's West. (Criterion A4)

The building also relates to the Australian Estates Company, an influential agricultural finance and agency corporation. Architecturally this building represents the epitome of wool store design with the functional married seamlessly to the decorative. (Criterion F1)¹

Management Guidelines

Recommended management guidelines for the significance and the cited fabric or contributory elements of the building were also prepared as part of the heritage citation for the place produced from the review, as follows (underlined for emphasis):

To conserve and enhance the significant elements of the place.

To conserve and enhance the public view of these elements.

To conserve and enhance the visual relationships between the contributory elements.

To ensure that new or altered elements within the place are visually recessive and related to the contributory elements.

To encourage continuation of the original use of the place.²

Comment on Significance

As identified in the SoS, the place is significant for its grand scale, architectural refinement, and demonstration of the wool industry's importance to the development of Victoria and Melbourne's west. While the building as a whole contributes to this significance through its scale and Interwar factory character, the front façade exemplifies the "seamless marrying of the functional with the decorative" as noted in the SoS.

The building's load-bearing face-brick construction, mansard roof, and symmetrical vertical bay rhythm are characteristic of factory design in the Interwar period. The architectural refinement of this style, however, is most apparent in the façade facing Sunshine Road (principal façade), with its stepped central entry, raised pediments featuring ram's head emblems and decorative mouldings, and Juliette balconies with wrought iron balustrades. By comparison, the side and rear façade are more utilitarian and simplified in their appearance. While they contribute to the overall scale and industrial character of the place, they are considered to be of lesser architectural significance than the principal frontage.

1.3.3 Non-Statutory Controls

The subject site is not listed by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Non-statutory heritage controls relate to property listings that have no formal or legal weight in the planning scheme. While having no legal recourse, such listings are customarily considered when making planning decisions and are representative of heritage values in the community by local authorities.

1.4 Conservation Approach

The overarching objective of conservation works are to retain the cultural heritage significance of a place. Conservation works should respond appropriately to the significance of the place and the integrity of its surviving fabric. It is therefore essential that works and management measures are carefully planned and executed to a high standard to ensure their long-term durability and to avoid unnecessary damage to heritage fabric.

The proposed Conservation Approach has been informed by the existing condition of the site, the identified cultural heritage significance of the place, established conservation practice, and the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter.

¹ Jill Barnard Graeme Butler Francine Giffedder & Gary Vines, 2000: Volume 3: Appendix 1: 182-184

² Ibid

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Consistent with pre-application advice and the nature of the proposed works outlined in Section 1.1, the Conservation Approach is divided into two categories: 'Essential Works' and 'Management Measures'.

Having regard to the SoS, and particularly the identified importance of the principal façade as the primary expression of the building's architectural significance, the Essential Works and Management Measures focus on the retention and enhancement of these significant elements. This approach is generally consistent with the management guidelines for the heritage place, as it seeks to conserve and enhance significant fabric, maintain the public presentation of the building, and support the ongoing viable use of the site during its proposed land use.

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2 Site Details

2.1 Historical Understanding

The Wool Store was constructed in April 1940 for the major wool brokers, Australian Estates, by Stuart Bros Pty Ltd, who had built a number of wool stores in Australia at the time. In an article reporting on the new Wool Store shortly after its opening, the £100,00 building was praised as an “improvement in modern accommodation and arrangements for handling wool”.³ In c.1941 it was provided with a siding from the nearby Tottenham rail yards to serve the building and the neighbouring wool store.



Figure 1: 1940 photograph of the newly constructed Wool Store for the Australian Estates. Source: State Library of Victoria.



Figure 2: C. 1950 view of the Wool Store. Source: State Library of Victoria.

An eastern metal cantilever verandah, designed by architects Marcus Martin + Stephen Dorling, was added to the building in 1958. In 1960, a new extension to the building was constructed, adding a total of 30,000 sq. foot to each of the four floors of the building. The extension was described as externally following the design of the original building, but internally applying many new techniques, including the elimination of obstructing columns on each storage floor.⁴ Further internal alterations for first-floor offices were designed by Martin + Dorling in 1963.

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³ *The Benalla Standard*, 20 August 1940, pg. 5

⁴ *The Pastoral Times*, 29 November 1960, pg. 7

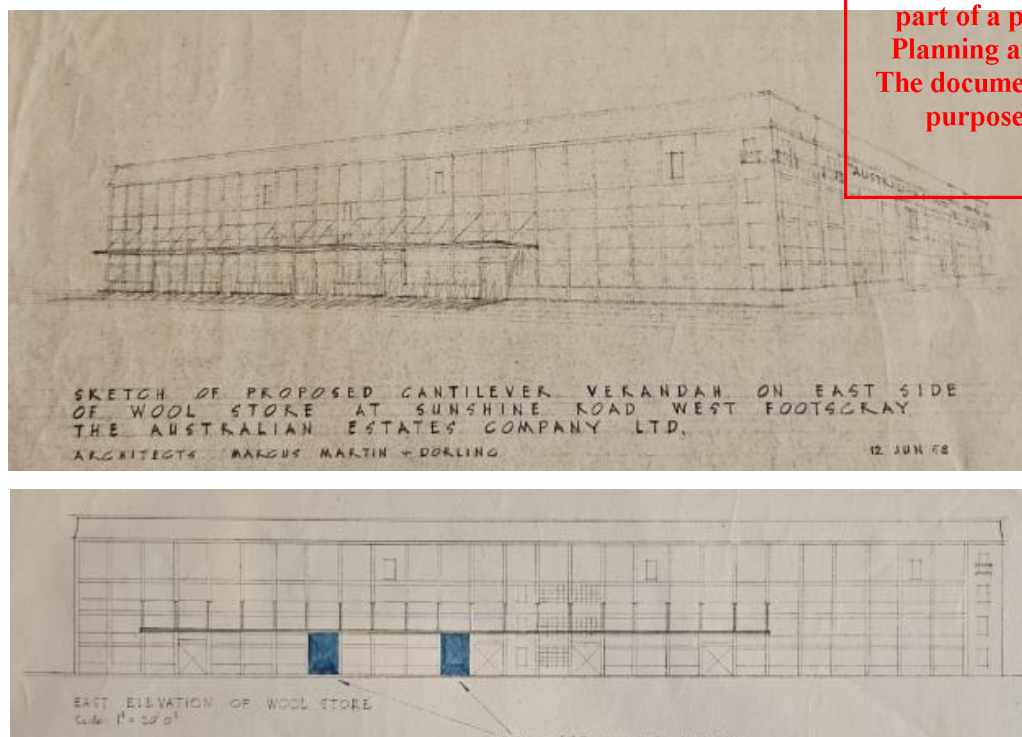


Figure 3: 3D perspective sketch & elevation drawing of the proposed cantilever awning to east elevation. Source: State Library of Victoria.

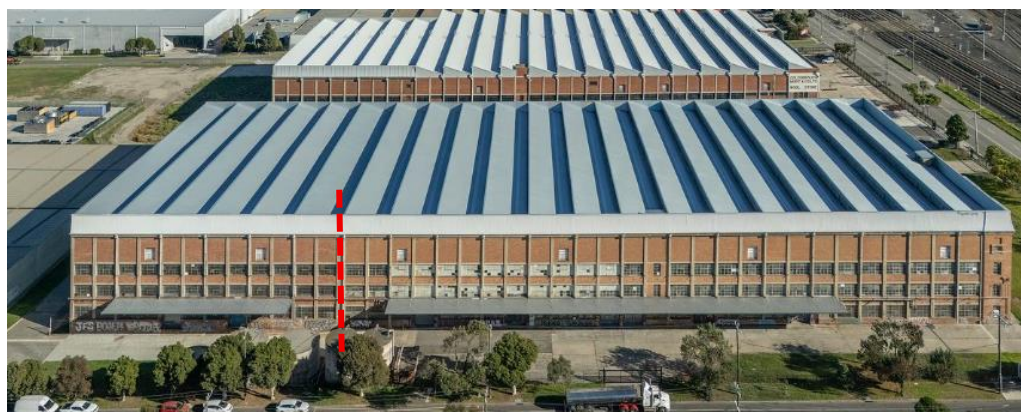


Figure 4: Aerial of the existing building, looking towards the eastern elevation. Left of the red dash line is the extent of the 1960s extension.

The building eventually ceased operation for the Australian Estates and transitioned to the base for several smaller wool brokers, including the Australian Wool Commission and Watswool Pty. Ltd, before shutting in the 1990s.

2.2 Existing Description and Condition

The existing Wool Store building remains generally intact in terms of its original / early external presentation, with later alterations including new signage (since defaced) relating to the Watswool Broker tenants. As noted in Section 2.1, the eastern metal awning and south of this awning are c.1950s alterations and additions to the building, though they are generally in keeping with the built character of the Wool Store.

As the building has been vacant for an extended period, maintenance has been limited in comparison to when the building was occupied and operational. Notwithstanding this, the external masonry walls appear to remain generally structurally sound, with the majority of observed deterioration relating to water ingress, weathering, and deferred maintenance. It is understood that the roof sheeting and gutters have been replaced in recent years, together with replacement of the sawtooth roof glazing using clear polycarbonate panels.

3 Conservation Works and Management Measures

3.1 Schedule of Conservation Works

The following table outlines recommendations for essential maintenance and repair works. These works are informed by site observations and have been prioritised to ensure the significant building fabric is preserved and enhanced during the proposed land use.

While more comprehensive repair, remediation and conservation works will likely need to be implemented in the future to address more substantial fabric deterioration, it is recommended these form part of a future comprehensive maintenance plan for the heritage place.

The works have been allocated a priority grading and should be read in conjunction with staging and indicative timeframes outlined in Section 3.2. Works codes listed in the left-hand column are to be read in conjunction with the elevation markups at Appendix A.

3.1.1 Essential Works

	Observation	Recommendations	Priority	Photograph
North (Principal) Elevation				
W-1	Missing, smashed or cracked glass windowpanes	Missing or damaged windowpanes to be replaced to match existing or with a clear Perspex / polycarbonate panel infill as a temporary repair measure.	Medium	
W-2	Water staining and organic growth to brickwork in some locations	Clean down brickwork, remove organic growth (vegetation, moss, mildew, fungi) and stains. Cleaning methodology can be found in Appendix B.	Medium	
W-3	Graffiti / paint coverage to external fabric	Remove graffiti with non-abrasive cleaning solution. Cleaning methodology can be found in Appendix C with additional graffiti removal codes (GR) indicated on elevation markups.	Low	

3.1.2 Staging and Recommended Timeframes

The works have been given a priority ranking of high, medium and low. The works have been ordered from a building process point of view, with the principal aim of undertaking those conservation works that are necessary to maintain and preserve the cultural heritage significance of the structure.

High Priority

Works with a high priority should be attended to as soon as practically possible or within six months. These works are contributing to the decay of the building and require immediate rectification to halt the decaying process. Prompt implementation of these works will significantly reduce further degradation of the building fabric.

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Medium Priority

These works could be implemented in stages. Their gradual implementation will provide for the building's long-term conservation. Works to be completed with one to two years.

Low Priority

Works with low priority relate to items that should be undertaken when the need or opportunity arises or within five years. They are generally cosmetic in nature.

3.2 Management Measures

The following section outlines recommended management measures to be undertaken in relation to heritage fabric before, during and after any events held at the subject site. They are intended to prevent damage or further deterioration of the building.

3.2.1 Prior to an event

- Prior to the first event held, a photographic condition record of the building should be undertaken.
- A heritage induction should be provided for staff involved with the setting up, running, and pack-down of events. Induction sessions are a direct way to provide staff with a foundational understanding of why the site and building are of heritage significance and inform them of their responsibilities and obligations in preventing any damage to the site during events.
- Ensure that no temporary event infrastructure, fixtures, or equipment are attached to, or supported by, the existing masonry walls.
- Establish access exclusion zones (e.g. temporary fencing, star pickets with barrier mesh, or bollards) and install signage where appropriate to restrict public access to unsupervised areas, such as back-of-house spaces and upper storeys. These exclusion measures should remain in place for the duration of the event and be removed during pack-down.

3.2.2 During an event

- Ongoing surveillance and monitoring should be undertaken by event staff for the duration of an event to discourage unauthorised access, vandalism or interference with the building

3.2.3 Following the conclusion of an event

- Following pack-down and removal of all temporary infrastructure, the site should be inspected to confirm that it has been left in a clean and orderly condition. This inspection should verify that all temporary works, fixings, equipment, and rubbish have been removed.
- As part of the post-event clean-up, a routine condition inspection of the building should be undertaken, including all external elevations and any internal spaces used during the event. This should be compared with the pre-event condition record. Any damage or interference identified should be documented, and advice sought from a heritage consultant or other suitably qualified professional regarding appropriate repair or remediation measures.

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Appendix A Elevation Markups



Figure 5: North (primary) elevation with Essential Works annotated. To be read in conjunction with works recommendations at Section 3.1.1.

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Appendix B Cleaning Methodology - Brickwork

Scope of Works

Remove staining, organic growth, and dirt / grime from brickwork where designated on the drawings.

Considerations

Numerous cleaning methods and systems are available, and can be categorized broadly into four groups: mechanical, aqueous, chemical and radiation-based (laser) cleaning.

The choice of cleaning technique will depend on many factors. The systems chosen should always be the least invasive method needed to achieve the level of cleaning required. The final decision should be based on cleaning trials which enable all those involved to agree on the most appropriate method.

Testing

To confirm the suitability of the proposed cleaning methodology, testing is required to determine the nature and extent of works, ascertain what type of stain is involved and ensure the selected cleaning method does not damage or cause ongoing issues with the brickwork and mortar joints.

Testing should be undertaken using the proposed methodology as stated below, adopting suitable 'tried and tested' materials and techniques in the first instance.

The test area, approx. 1m², should be in a discrete section of the wall and adjacent to an identical uncleaned area so that comparisons can be made.

If the test is successful, confirm/record the works, materials and techniques and seek approval to proceed before carrying out the total extent of work. Where the methodology, materials and / or techniques fail or do not produce a satisfactory outcome, further methods should be sought, testing undertaken and approval before proceeding.

Cleaning Methodology

Stage 1 – General clean of surface contaminants

1. Apply a fine mist of water to soak the surface.
2. Using a medium to hard nylon brush the surface of the brickwork to remove surface contaminate.
3. Wash off residue with low to high pressure water or wash and scrub clean with medium to hard nylon brush, collecting all run-off for proper disposal.
4. Dispose of all waste in accordance with the requirements of relevant governing bodies.
5. Repeat above process with hot water and non-ionic detergent, if required.

Stage 2 – Removal of heavy staining (Poultice Method)

1. Mix poultice thoroughly before use. If spraying, mix with approved quantities of water.
2. Apply poultice onto designated brickwork at a minimum thickness of 3mm or as otherwise approved from the trials.
3. Leave for up to 24 hours or as otherwise approved from the trials. If the poultice is to remain in place for more than 12 hours, ensure poultice is kept moist by spraying water or wrapping. Do not allow the poultice to dry on the brickwork.
4. Check stain removal with a scraper. Once adequate removal has been achieved, proceed with removal.
5. Remove poultice with a scraper, taking care to not damage underlying brickwork and pointing. This may involve use of a fine spatula for adequate removal at eroded bed and

perpend joints between bricks in some locations. All waste should be collected in buckets for appropriate disposal.

6. Wash off residue with low to high pressure water or wash and scrub clean with medium to hard nylon brush, collecting all run-off for proper disposal.
7. Repeat process if staining is excessively thick.
8. Dispose of all waste in accordance with the requirements of relevant governing bodies.

Stage 3 – Repointing of the brickwork

1. Where the above stages have removed the mortar between the bricks this should be replaced to match existing.

Stage 4 – Future staining provisions

2. Ensure the source of the staining has been eliminated, or measures implemented to make sure it doesn't reoccur.

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Appendix C Graffiti Removal

Scope of Works

Remove graffiti coverage to external fabric, which generally is to ALL external elevations.

Considerations

Various removal methods are available depending on the applicable surface, as outlined below.

Aggressive or industrial graffiti removal materials and techniques should not be used to remove graffiti from heritage places. Historic masonry is usually made of stone or brick held together with lime mortar or early cement or limecrete mortar. It is softer and more porous than modern masonry and is easily damaged by modern, industrial graffiti removal techniques and materials.

Testing

To confirm the suitability of the proposed cleaning methodology, testing is required to determine the nature and extent of works and ensure the selected cleaning method does not damage or cause ongoing issues to building fabric.

Testing should be undertaken using the proposed methodology as stated below, adopting suitable 'tried and tested' materials and techniques in the first instance.

The test area, approx. 1m², should be in a discrete section of the wall and adjacent to an identical uncleaned area so that comparisons can be made.

If the test is successful, confirm/record the works, materials and techniques and seek approval to proceed before carrying out the total extent of work. Where the methodology, materials and / or techniques fail or do not produce a satisfactory outcome, further methods should be sought, testing undertaken and approval before proceeding.

Removal Methodology

	Applicable Surface	Methods and Materials
GR-1	Unpainted brick Render	Bare Masonry treatment: solvents applied by garden sprayer and dissolved graffiti rinsed off with warm water jet. Additional notes: Solvent based strippers should not be used where the paint to which the graffiti has been applied is historic or is to be retained. Lower toxicity, solvent based paint strippers should be tested first and used if effective. These lower toxicity solvents based on dibasic esters, d-limonene or benzyl alcohol are less hazardous to applicators and the public. Caustic strippers are made from strongly alkaline chemicals such as sodium hydroxide (NaOH - caustic soda), potassium hydroxide (KOH - lye), sodium carbonate (Na₂CO₃ - washing soda), sodium peroxide (Na₂O₂) or amines, are not recommended. The 'neutralising' solutions recommended for acid and caustic strippers can cause further damage the masonry by etching or forming salts. Process for gelled or thickened, solvent-based paint strippers. Lower toxicity, solvent-based paint strippers tend to act more slowly than those made with more toxic solvents. This may lead to more successful outcomes. Manufacturers generally recommend a minimum of 6-48 hours dwell time. If the paint is taking longer to respond, the covered stripper can be left in place for longer periods. In this case, lightly spray the outside of the paper with water on a regular basis to keep the stripper active. When a cover paper is used and the

		stripper is left in place for the correct amount of time, the stripper can pull a lot of the paint off the wall onto the paper. It may also pull the paint out of pores of historic masonry. When the paper has been removed, scrape the gel and paint away with plastic or wooden tools and nylon or natural bristle brushes. Wipe off the remainder of the paint and stripper with damp cloths, clear (neutralise) the gel with Shellite1 and then rinse all residues off the wall as discussed below. Several applications of the recommended strippers may be needed. Alternately, leave the cover on for 2-7 days and lightly spray the outside of the paper with water regularly to keep the stripper active. It is essential to not let it dry out. It is essential that all stripper chemicals, carriers and paint residues are thoroughly rinsed off the masonry using low pressure tap water (below 300psi). Nylon or natural bristle brushes, and hand dishwash detergent may be used to aid rinsing. Captive head washing (for example Blu Vac) is the recommended rinse method because this collects the rinse water which, together with all other waste, must be disposed of according to the relevant Worksafe and EPA requirements.
GR-2	Painted timber (e.g. window frames & doors)	Paint out graffiti - Painting over graffiti with new paint needs to be compatible with graffiti type. Where graffiti has been applied over external modern paint, which is in good condition, it may be acceptable to repaint in the same colour and type of paint as long as the paint layers do not become more than approximately 2mm thick. Due to the amount of dirt, dust and grime on all facades a thorough preparatory warm water/detergent wash-down will be required before any painting can be carried out.
GR-3	Unpainted metal (e.g. roof sheeting)	Chemical, Delicate & Fade-out treatment: solvents applied by soft brush and rinsed off with warm water jet. Additional notes: Solvent-based paint strippers without acid additives are suitable for all uncoated metals. Ammonia-free lime-based paint strippers may be used to remove graffiti from unpainted cast iron and steel, copper and bronze but not from brass or aluminium. Thorough rinsing is essential. Acid paint strippers will corrode metals and should never be used.
GR-4	Painted metal (e.g. rainwater goods)	Delicate & Fade-out Treatment: solvents applied by soft cloth, wiped off and surface neutralised with water.
GR-5	Glass	Delicate & Fade-out Treatment: solvents applied by soft cloth, wiped off and surface neutralised with water.

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