

STANDARDS FOR RENOVATION WESTMINSTER



A Development Guide Provided by
the City of Westminster
Historic District Commission

Adopted on March 13, 2019

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Adopted by the City of Westminster Historic District Commission on March 13, 2019.

These standards are based off of the original Standards for Renovation Westminster, adopted in 1978.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

These standards for rehabilitation consider the various historic characteristics and elements of the Westminster National Historic District. Key contributing historic characteristics for preservation consideration include buildings and outbuildings. Those historic characteristics include the building façade; the building exterior other than the façade i.e., the "building shell"; rear lot areas such as yards and service zones; store fronts and show windows; and sign design size and locations. Of concern is any portion of the historic structure seen by the public.

The Standards are specific and were originally prepared in a form which is intended to foster their adoption as a part of the Westminster Town Center Renewal Plan. However, it is also appropriate to state more briefly the general objectives of the proposed Standards in order that they may be discussed and a consensus reached amongst the interested parties as to their acceptance. The following, therefore, is a more general statement upon which the detailed Standards have been prepared.

General Objectives for Exterior Rehabilitation

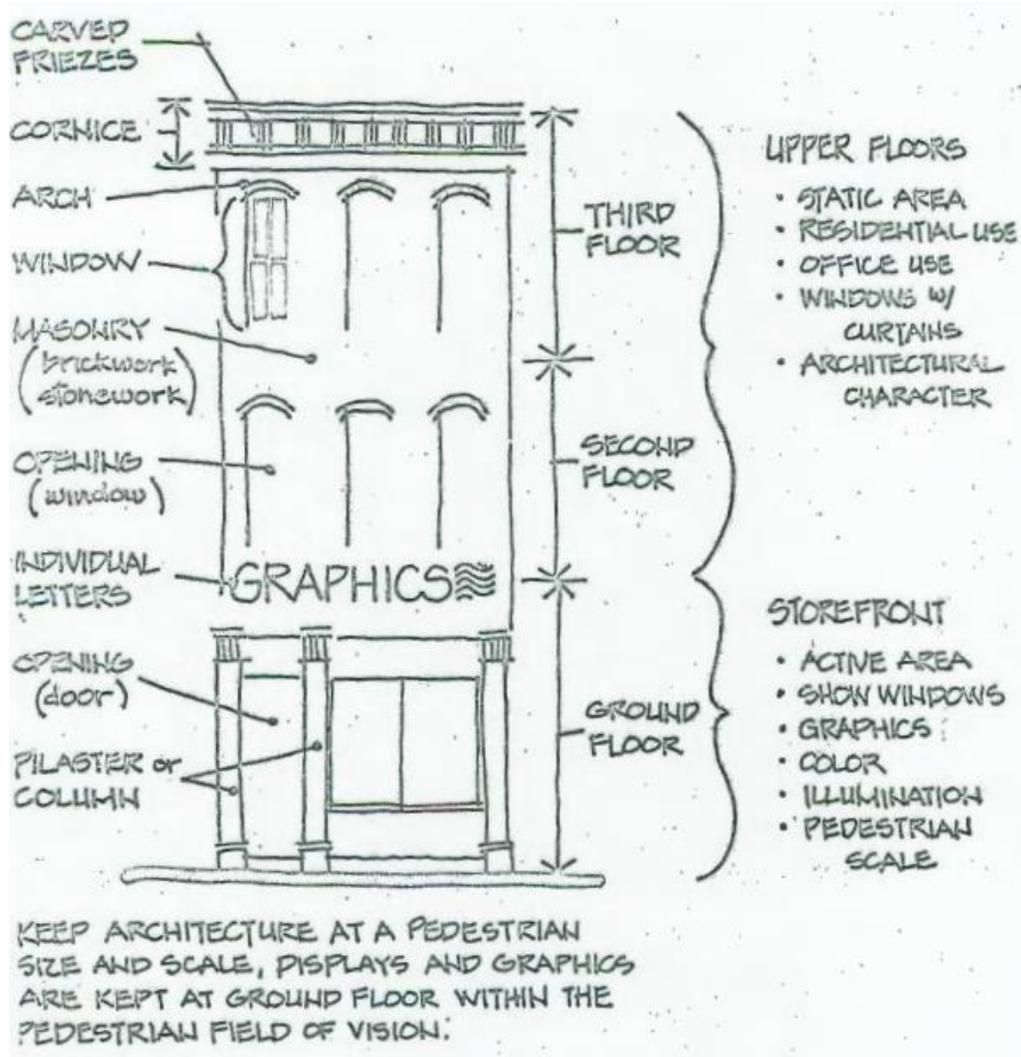
1. The rehabilitation objective is to retain and, where possible, to recapture the original architectural character of the building. In most cases, the building façades above the first floor have undergone little or no alterations to their original design. Cleaning, repairing, and refinishing of masonry, cornices, windows, and other elements on the exterior is, therefore, encouraged.
2. Where a building façade has been altered through the use of covering material(s), the recapture of original character is encouraged by removal of applied material(s) and repairing and restoring the original façade.
3. In many cases, the ground floor façades, especially storefronts, have undergone substantial changes from the original construction and it may be impractical to duplicate the original design and materials. In such cases where new storefront construction is contemplated, storefront design with materials different from the original building may be necessary. Nevertheless, to the furthest extent possible, certain salvageable elements such as pilasters, columns, or cornices could be incorporated in the new design, and large blank wall areas at the ground floor should be avoided. The ground floor design should be compatible and sympathetic with the architectural character and materials of the building.

4. Where screening is desired, the use of suitable curtains, blinds, or shutters is encouraged. The removal of windows should be avoided.
5. Unused miscellaneous elements remaining on building fronts, such as empty electrical conduit, sign brackets, etc. should be removed.
6. Additions or expansion of existing structures should be compatible with the material and architectural character of the existing building.
7. Placement of signs should be generally restricted to the ground floor of the main street elevation of the building. Signs should be designed in a manner so that they do not interfere with important architectural details (e.g., cornices, carved friezes, arches, etc.) of the building. Generally, the new signs should be in the confines of an opening (e.g., window, foyer, doorway, etc.).
8. In special circumstances, signs may be placed on upper floors, if it is determined:
 - a. there is no prudent means of accommodating the sign on the first floor consistent with the paragraph above, or
 - b. certain special signs (such as those incorporating weather information) or signs announcing the name of a building.

Signs under (b.) should consist of individual letters attached to the building surface or be designed as an integral part of the building. Painted signs on the building surface are discouraged.

9. Painted graphic design or murals may be permitted with "special" approval by the Historic District Commission (Commission).
10. Design of signs by qualified graphic designers is encouraged. Size, shape, letter style(s), colors, lighting, method of installation, and general compatibility with the building design should be considered. Use of graphic symbols are encouraged.

Chapter 2 – Standards for Renovation



Nomenclature for Standards for Exterior Rehabilitation

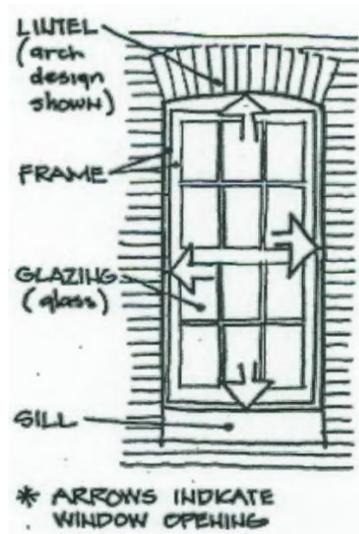
BUILDING FAÇADE

1. BUILDING FRONT WALLS (FAÇADE)

- a. Building front is defined as all sides of a building facing a public right-of-way.
- b. All exterior walls above the ground floor (forming part of the original construction) of a building should be cleaned and repaired. Brick walls should be pointed where necessary with compatible materials. Historically-painted masonry walls should have all loose material removed and be painted a single color, except for trim, which may be another color. Patched walls should match the existing adjacent surfaces as to material, color, bond, and joining.
 - i. All structural and decorative elements of the building front above the ground floor should be repaired or replaced where necessary in a professional manner to match the original materials and construction techniques (in-kind replacement).
 - ii. All exposed and visible surfaces should be cleaned or painted and repaired to present an acceptable appearance.
 - iii. In the case of corner buildings, these regulations should apply to all frontages on public rights-of-way.
- c. In the case of original front walls which have been wholly or partially resurfaced or built over, unless determined to be historic in their own right, these surfacing materials should be removed and the building front repaired in the manner described by the Commission. If restoration of the original materials is determined to be infeasible, the front should be improved in a manner acceptable to the Commission.

2. WINDOWS AND WINDOW FRAMES

- a. All broken and missing windows should be glazed. All frames, lintels, and sills should be repaired and replaced as needed. All exposed wood should be repaired with in-kind materials and painted.
- b. Window openings in upper floors of the building façade shall not be filled or "boarded up". Windows in unused areas of the upper floors should have an acceptable opaque surface on the inside of the glass or should otherwise be treated in an acceptable manner to prevent a view of the interior. Painting of window panes is not acceptable. Retention of original windows, when possible, is encouraged.



Windows

3. CORNICES

All cornices should be made structurally sound, and rotted or weakened portions should be repaired or removed and replaced to match the original patterns. All exposed wood should be painted.

4. AIR CONDITIONING UNITS

Use of window air conditioning units should be avoided in principal façades.

5. DORMERS

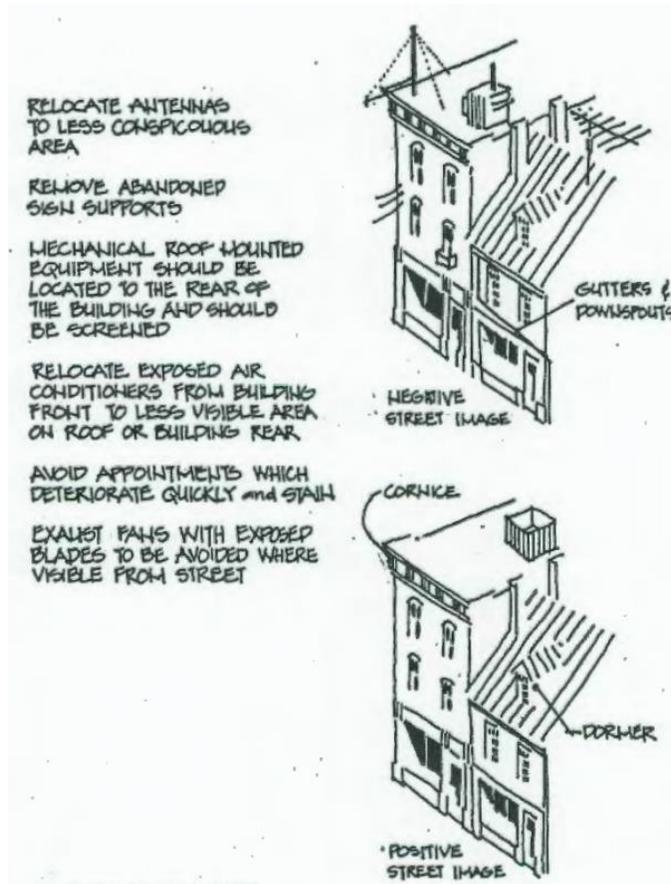
Dormers on roofs sloping toward the building façade should be treated with the same criteria as building fronts.

6. MISCELLANEOUS

Existing abandoned modern elements on the building fronts, such as empty electrical conduit for signs, unused sign brackets, etc., should be eliminated.

7. GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

Gutters and downspouts should be repaired or replaced (in-kind) as necessary and should be neatly located and securely installed. Gutters and downspouts should be painted to harmonize with other building façade colors.



Building Façade (Building Front)

BUILDING SHELL (Other than the Main Street Façade)

1. CRITERIA

- a. A group of buildings being used by a single tenant should be renovated in a unified and sympathetic manner.
- b. Buildings should be rehabilitated and repaired with in-kind materials and consistent with the Secretary of Interior Standards.

2. REAR AND SIDE WALLS

- a. Rear and side walls should be repaired to present a neat and fresh appearance.
- b. Rear and side walls, where visible from the shopping street and public spaces, should be finished or painted so as to be sympathetic with the façade treatment of the building.

3. ROOFS

- a. Chimneys, elevator shafts, penthouses, or any other auxiliary structures on the roofs should be repaired and cleaned as required for rear and side walls. Any construction visible from the street or from other buildings should be finished so as to be sympathetic with other visible building walls.
- b. Any mechanical equipment placed on a roof should be so located as to be viewed as inconspicuously as possible. Equipment should be screened with suitable elements of a permanent nature and finished so as to harmonize with the rest of the building. Where such screening is impossible or impractical, equipment should be installed in a neat and presentable manner and should be painted to minimize its visibility.
- c. Telecommunications antennas should be located as inconspicuously as possible and should be installed in a neat and professional manner.

REAR YARDS AND SERVICE AREAS

Where a rear yard exists and is unused or is created through the demolition of structures, the owner should condition the open area as follows:

- a. A rear yard may be enclosed along the side and rear property lines by a masonry wall if it is consistent and sympathetic with the walls of the building being improved upon, or
- b. An unenclosed rear yard may be used as a parking or loading area, providing that it meets all City Code requirements.
- c. Open fences are not recommended unless they are historic. Chain link fencing would not be appropriate in the Historic District.
- d. No storage or trash containers should be in this area, except when enclosed in structures of acceptable design or camouflaged by sympathetic landscaping and/or permanent screening.

Chapter 3 – Standards for Signs



Sign area and Location



Maximum cutout letter size (area)

1. DESIGN CRITERIA

- a. Design drawings of all proposed signs shall be submitted to the City for approval prior to fabrication and installation. Submission shall show the sign location in relation to the overall building façade.
- b. Moving signs or devices of any type other than barber poles shall not be permitted.
- c. Materials employed for construction of signs shall be durable and weather resistant, and all signs shall be maintained in good repair.
- d. The copy on any sign shall be limited to the name of the business and any other pertinent information related to the bona-fide business conducted on the premises. The advertising by material or product manufacturers and suppliers will not be permitted on any exterior sign except as the primary identification for the place of business.
- e. Signs shall be fabricated and installed by qualified and experienced mechanics.
- f. Lettering should be known or recognizable type styles, correctly executed.
- g. Signs made out of a nylon material can be used as temporary signage for up to six weeks after installation.
- h. All proposed signage must obtain an Application for Sign or Awning approved by the City of Westminster, Department of Community Planning and Development.

2. FLAT SIGNS

- a. Flat signs shall be placed parallel to the face of building.
- b. Flat signs are to be mounted in locations that respect the design of the building.
- c. Separate cutout letters applied to the building face may be used and are subject to the same regulations as flat signs.
- d. The maximum allowable sign size (area) shall be determined by multiplying the length of the building front times two (2).

Example: 40 foot building front, $40 \times 2 = 80$. Maximum sign size is 80 square feet in area. Area of sign or the area of the building surface

occupied by separate cutout letters shall not exceed the maximum allowable sign size. In the case of corner properties, the maximum sign size (area) to be calculated separately in direct proportion to the building frontage on each street.

- e. Signs should be located so that no portion of the sign is higher than one inch below second-story windowsill line.
- f. Flat signs may not project more than twelve inches beyond the primary surface of the building.
- g. Flat signs may be luminous or illuminated by any acceptable method. No blinking, flashing, alternating lighting, or variable electronic message sign (VEMS) shall be permitted. All lighting and electrical elements such as wires, conduit, junction boxes, transformers, ballasts, switches, and panel boxes shall be concealed from view. Internally lighted box-type signs will not be permitted except when they are designed so that:
 - 1. The color combination and arrangement of the façade is compatible with the sign.
 - 2. The top, bottom, and sides of the sign is trimmed in a manner which is compatible with the design, material, and color of the façade.
 - 3. The box shape of the sign is sculpturally incorporated into the relief of the façade.
- h. Signs painted directly on the building surface shall be permitted in accordance with the above regulations for flat signs.

3. BLADE SIGNS (PROJECTING)

- a. Blade signs shall be affixed to the face of a building not higher than one inch below the second story windowsill line. The minimum clearance shall not be less than seven feet.



- b. Blade signs shall not be more than three square feet in size and shall not extend more than three feet from the face of the building.
- c. Blade signs shall be a two-foot minimum distance from any curb, lamppost, and street tree.
- d. No blade sign shall be internally illuminated.

4. SECONDARY SIGNS

- a. Non-illuminated secondary sign(s) shall be permitted at the ground floor level for the identification of commercial tenants occupying the upper floors of the building. Such signs shall not exceed one square foot in area and shall not project beyond the primary surface of the building.
- b. Lettering applied to ground-floor show windows or entrance doors shall be permitted, provided that characters do not exceed two and one-half inches in height, and the text is limited to the identification of the business, except in the case of primary signs as permitted under 'Design Criteria' Section 1d.

5. AWNING SIGNS

- a. Signs, symbols, or designs painted or sewn onto awnings are permitted.
- b. All proposed signage must obtain an Application for Sign or Awning approved by the City of Westminster, Department of Community Planning and Development.

6. DELIVERY SIGNS

Signs identifying the occupant shall be permitted at the rear entrance doors to the premises. Such signs shall be of non-luminous type, but may be illuminated by a protected, shielded LED light directed at the sign. The size of the sign shall not exceed six square feet in area. No other sign shall be permitted on the rear of the building. Lighting shall not project glare onto another property.

7. PROHIBITED LOCATIONS FOR SIGNS

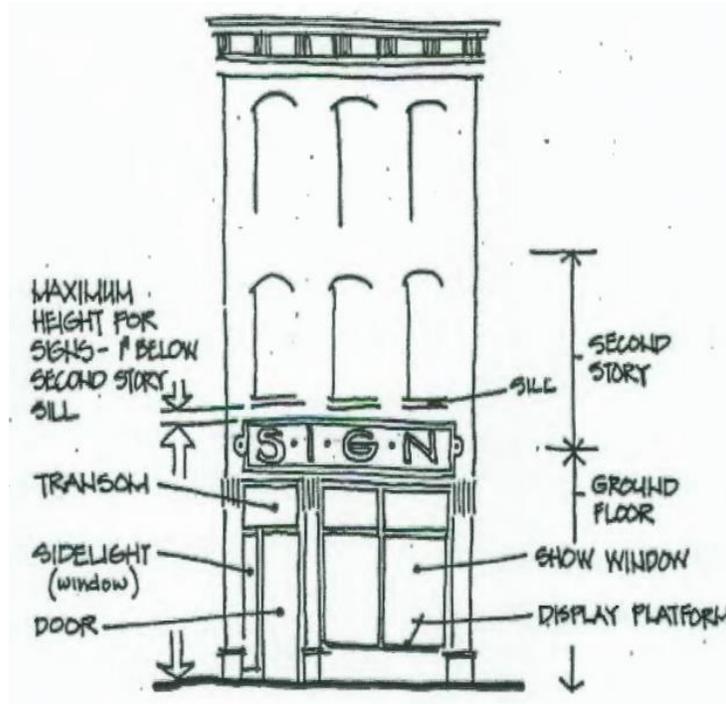
Signs shall not be placed:

- a. On the fronts of buildings above the ground floor level, or above a height of one inch below the second floor windowsill line, whichever is lower;
- b. On the roofs of buildings;
- c. Directly on the inside and covering show windows.

8. BILLBOARDS

Billboards or outdoor advertising panels shall not be permitted.

Chapter 4 – Standards for the Design of Storefronts, Show Windows, and Entrances



Nomenclature for Storefronts

DEFINITION

For the purposes of the design criteria, a "show window" as a part of the building façade shall be defined to include the building face and the entrance area leading to the door, the door, and sidelights and transoms, and all display platforms and devices, including lighting and signage designed to be viewed from the public right-of-way and/or the areas visible to the public prior to entering the interior portion of the structure.

1. DESIGN CRITERIA

- a. The design of all proposed new store fronts, show windows, and entrances and any alterations must be submitted for approval prior to construction.
- b. Solid or permanently enclosed or covered store fronts will not be permitted, unless treated as an integral part of the building façade, i.e., using similar or compatible wall materials and window detailing as the upper floors.

- c. Show windows, entrances, signs, lighting, sun protection, security grilles, etc. should be designed to be compatible, sympathetic, and consistent with the scale and character of the existing structures. All elements of the storefront including awnings, signs, show windows, etc. should be located within the area between the pavement and one inch below the second story windowsill line.
- d. Show windows should not be painted for advertising purposes. Identification of the place of business may be painted on the show window if no other primary signage is used, subject to approval by the Commission.

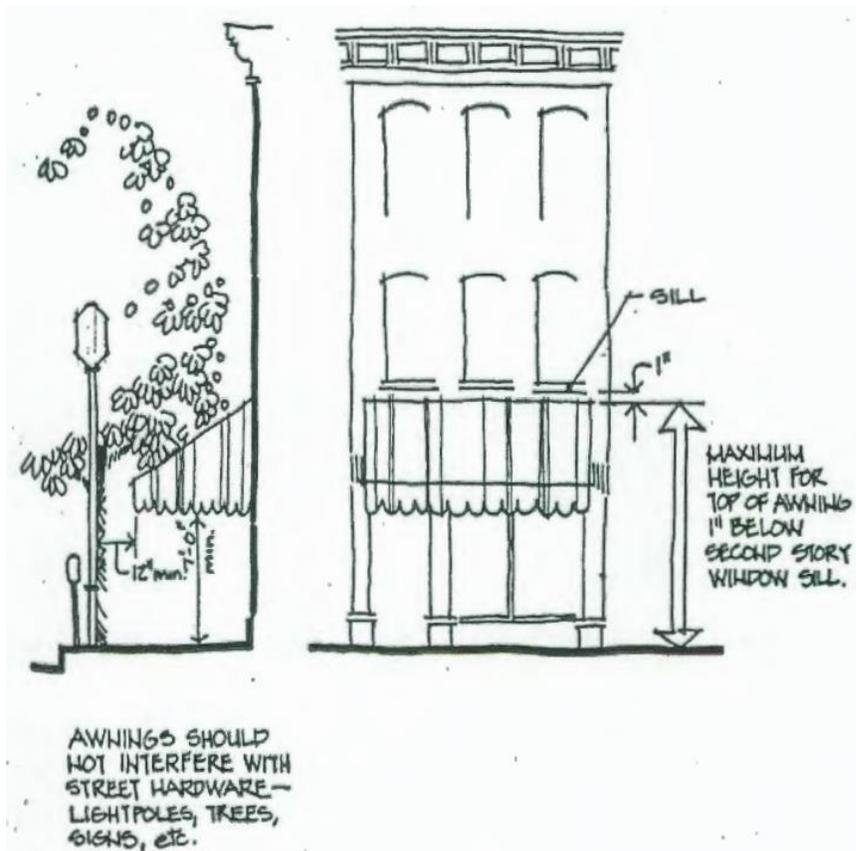
Likewise, no temporary or permanent signs may be affixed or placed against the inside surface of show windows.

2. SECURITY GRILLES AND SCREENS

Enclosures and housings for security grilles and screens should not be exposed or visible, but should be designed as an integral element of the storefront.

3. AWNINGS

- a. Soft, retractable awnings are permitted at the first floor.
- b. Awnings should be flame proof.
- c. Awnings should not project from the building front so as to interfere with street trees, lampposts, etc.
- d. Awnings should terminate against the building at a height not higher than one inch below the second floor windowsill.
- e. Fixed 'rooflets' in lieu of awnings should not project more than 18 inches from the store front, or as approved by the Commission. A 'rooflet' is a minor roof with a pitch not steeper than 4 inches per foot. 'Mansard' roofs are not permitted except as befits the original character of the overall building.



Awnings

OTHER REFERENCES

Preservation Brief No. 1 entitled "The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings" and Preservation Brief No. 2 entitled "Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Brick Buildings" issued by the Technical Preservation Services Division of the National Park Service. Limited copies are available from the Maryland Historic Trust, Shaw House, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD, 21401.

"The 8 Most Common Mistakes in Restoring Historic Houses (... And How to Avoid Them)" issued by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and available from that office, located at 740-748 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

"Guidelines for Rehabilitating Old Buildings" issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Limited copies are available from the Maryland Historical Trust, Shaw House, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD, 21401.

"Historic Building Evaluation Guide and Recommendations for Restoration Repairs of Old Buildings" issued by Preservation Resource Group, Inc., 5619 Southhampton Drive, Springfield, Virginia, 22151.

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