



Atelier
Heritage

ST. MARGARET'S CHAMBERS
Heritage Statement

February 2023
Job 1907



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Images 1 and 2: Showing main elevations of St. Margaret's Chambers, facing Newton Street and Piccadilly.

1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement accompanies a listed building and planning application for St Margaret's Chambers, 5 Newton Street, Manchester. It has been produced by Atelier Heritage in February 2023 and the author is Laura Jessup, MA History and Theory of Architecture, PGCert. Conservation of the Historic Environment.

2.0 Location and Description

St Margaret's Chambers is a commercial premises, built as ground floor shops with offices above. Dating from the last decade of the 19th century, the property is four storeys of red/pink brick, plus an attic and a basement. It is elaborate in architectural style with a decorative frieze to external elevations, and ornate gables.

The premises have their main frontage along Newton Street and a small frontage to Piccadilly. Newton Street sits on the edge of Manchester's Northern Quarter, an area of diverse architectural character, housing a significant number of former warehouses and commercial properties which illustrate the city's development architecturally and economically. Its location on a prominent city junction elevates the building's status. St Margaret's Chambers is within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area and is Grade II listed. The Historic England description is included here.

SJ8498SE NEWTON STREET 698-1/29/246 (North West side) Nos.1 TO 11 (Odd) St Margaret's Chambers
GV II

Includes: No.63 St Margaret's Chambers PICCADILLY.

Shops with numerous offices over (in 1905 mostly manufacturers' agents). c.1890; altered. Pink brick in Flemish bond, with sandstone dressings and some

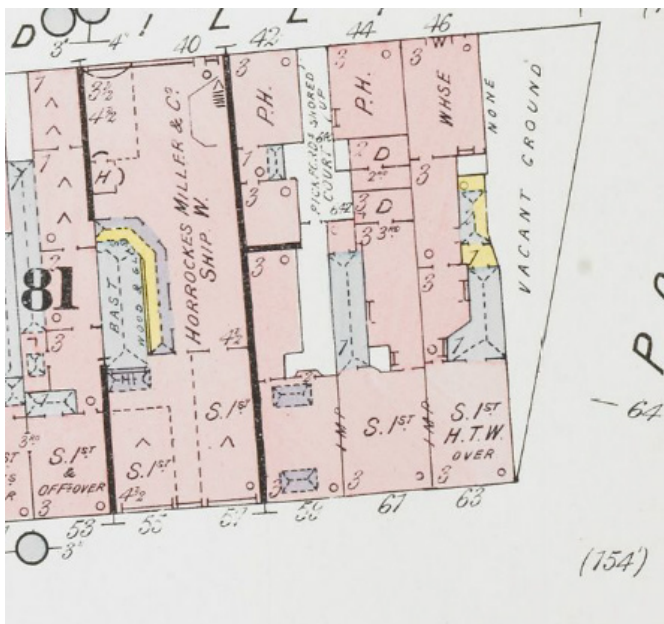


Image 3: Goads Plan showing vacant site in 1886. St Margaret's Chambers was built shortly after this date.

terracotta matching this (probably cladding iron frame), 4-span slate roof. Shallow trapezoidal plan parallel to street. Elizabethan style. Four storeys and attic; 8 bays plus a narrow chamfered corner to the right, the bays divided by semi-octagonal shafts and linked in pairs under 4 large elaborate shaped gables; with a cornice over the ground floor, a deep decorated frieze and cornice over the 1st floor, and a cornice over the 3rd floor. The ground floor has a wide doorway in the 5th bay under a keyed elliptical arch with decorated spandrels, but is otherwise altered by C20 shop-fronts; the 1st floor has recessed canted 3-light windows with altered glazing, the 2nd and 3rd floors have mullioned windows of 3 lights except in the 7th and 8th bays which have 2-light windows; the attic has smaller mullioned windows with 1 and 2 lights in each bay, the division caused by the outer shafts of the shaped gables (which are also pierced). The left end presents one bay to Piccadilly, and the right-hand end is canted, both in matching style. Interior not inspected.

Listing NGR: SJ8454398278

Newton Street, 65 Piccadilly. L.S. (Left hand side.) 1 Leicester (The) Cycle Co. cycle manufs 2 Ousey Frank, pawnbroker 3 ST. MARGARET'S CHAMBERS. 4 Ewart Wm. & Son, Lim. linen mfrs 5 Pawsons & Leads, Limited, general warehousemen—Thos. Ousey, rep 6 Fraser William & Co. Lim. clothiers 7 Schorestene Frères, manufacturers 8 Textile (The) Manufacturing Co. valveteen manufacturers 9 Clague Wm. J. manufacturers' agent 10 Graves Thos. H. manufacturers' agent 11 & 8 British Xylonite Co. Limited—Sydney Leslie, manager 12 & 10 Flinn & Seligmann, coman. agnts 13 Dominion Steamship Co. 14 Blackburn George, commission agent 15 Watson Arnold, incorporated agent 16 Martin & Martins, leather goods mfrs 17 Gribbin Albert Edward, manufacturers' agent 18 Hindley Walter H. & Co. jute goods manufacturers 19 Pith & Moorhouse, coloured goods mfrs 20 Kornweibel A. & Co. manufacturers' agts 21 Pison Etienne, manufacturers' agent 22 Graves Thomas, agent 23 Dow W. R. & Co. commission agents	here is 50 Sun t Bla Chu Hil Dic here is here is x 111 B 113 Li c here is here is 2 Ke 4 Ers 4 Tur 4 Lat 6 Kir N here is 8 We 10 Dre 12 W I 14 Wa 16 Bar here is here is
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Images 4 and 5: Extracts from Trade Directories, 1895 and 1903 (National Archives).

Internally, floors 1-4 follow a similar layout: circulation core and lift to the rear of the building; external lightwell; various rooms to either side; a large open room to the Piccadilly-facing end and a series of smaller rooms to the Newton Street-facing elevation, linked by corridors. The ground floor houses the main entrance hall and has individual self-contained units accessed through their own doors. Fire escape doors exit to Back Piccadilly via an external metal stair. Note that the basement has not yet been investigated.

Floors 1-4 are currently vacant, having most recently been used as a language school (vacated Spring 2020). The ground floor is in a mixture of uses with some vacant units.

3.0 History

St Margaret's Chambers dates from the end of the 19th Century. Published sources attribute the building to Charles Henry Heathcote and date it between 1885 and 1889. Photographic and mapping evidence from 1885/6 show an empty site, but it is likely the building was constructed soon after.

Heathcote was a prolific Manchester architect whose commissions included the Commercial Union Offices in Spring Gardens; Northern Rock Building Society, Cross Street; 107 Piccadilly; Henshaw's Blind Asylum in Stretford and, it was estimated at one point, half of the factories in Trafford Park.



Image 6: Photograph of exterior Piccadilly/Newton Street corner, 1966 (Manchester Archives).



Image 7: Photograph of exterior, Newton Street, 1966 (Manchester Archives).



Image 8: Photograph of Piccadilly/Newton Street view, 1979 (Manchester Archives).

The earliest found reference to the building is in the trade directory from 1895, listing various manufacturer's agents.

Research in newspaper archives shows St Margaret's Chambers named as the Manchester offices of the West India and Pacific Company in 1891. In 1896 an advertisement in the Manchester Guardian describes 'single and double' offices within the building with 'perfect light' and a 'passenger elevator'.

Further references from Lloyd's List, show that between 1903 and 1910 St Margaret's Chambers was occupied by The Pacific Steam Navigation Company and other agents.

As industry and commerce changed, so the uses within the building were replaced with a mixture of general businesses. An advertisement from 1918 describes St Margaret's Chambers as being suitable for manufacturers agents, having a 'general packing room' which was likely in the basement or part of the ground floor. The building also offered shared stockroom facilities on the ground floor.

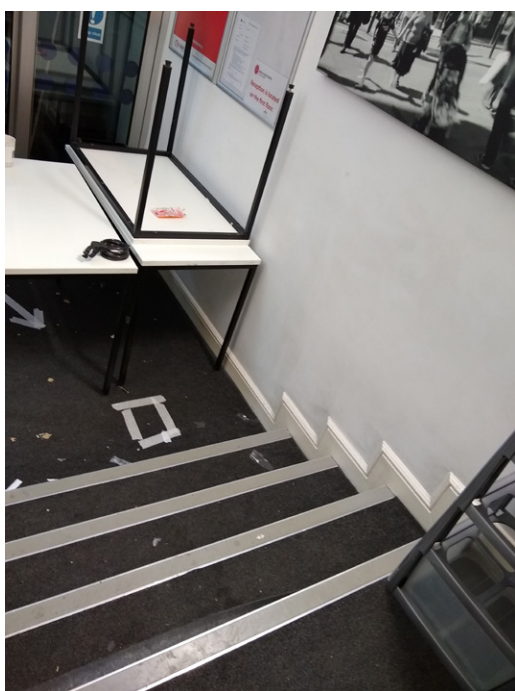
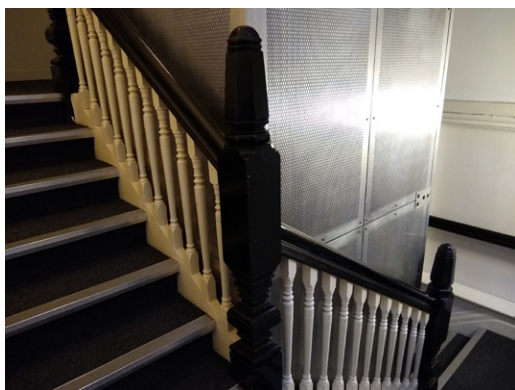
4.0 Significance

Assessment using categories set out in Conservation Principles (Historic England).

St Margaret's Chambers has architectural and historical significance, as recognised by its Grade II designation. The building has been assessed under the categories used by Historic England in their Conservation Principles document (2008).

Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

As a multi-tenanted office space, it is not possible to date all the piecemeal changes made to the space by successive owners and tenants, which frequently went undocumented. However, even with its alterations, the listed asset is a fair example of 19th century commercial architecture, typical of the period and characteristic of those examples found in this area of Manchester.



Images 9, 10, 11: Showing modern lift in original location, central to staircase and to be retained; original glazed tiling to be retained; entrance stairs to be partially removed to fit access lift.

The external elevations retain high significance. The internal plan form, in particular the separate ground floor shop units, the wide staircase, the layout of rooms and the existence of the lightwell give some insight into the way a building of this period functioned, though the loss of some internal detail has compromised this to some extent.

Level of evidential value: medium

Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present - it tends to be illustrative or associative.

St Margaret's Chambers displays the character of industrial Manchester in the 19th century. It offers the ability to interpret a particular time in the past and retains a level of intactness externally and in plan, despite its various alterations. Its city centre setting and relationship to other historic commercial premises contributes to its significance.

Level of historical value: medium

Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

The building is attractive in elevations, with ornate detailing and gabled forms. The use of red brick is typical of the city and the architectural composition has a good aesthetic value; the elevations are characterful and enjoyable to look at from the exterior. Internally, there are some modern interventions which have little or no aesthetic value, but the tiling, fireplaces, and smaller details such as skirtings and original doors are of a higher aesthetic value.

Level of aesthetic value: high externally, high to decorative parts internally and lower to standard features and later interventions.

Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

The area around Piccadilly Gardens and the Northern Quarter retains a unique sense of character which is important to 'place-making' within this part of Manchester. The architecture reflects the period of growth fuelled by the Industrial Revolution and the decades following it, which saw the city prosper as a commercial centre. St Margaret's Chambers contributes



Image 12: Photograph of fourth floor showing exposed timber roof structure. Raised floors will allow ceilings to remain exposed.



Image 13: Showing typical original sash one over one window forms, second floor. All sashes to be retained, repaired and secondary glazing fitted if required.



Images 14, 15: Showing modern carpet removed to expose parquet flooring to third floor and typical timber floorboards (second floor).

to this character and, whilst most 'experience' the building as part of the street-scape, it is nonetheless an important contributor to its locality and has a role within the larger group of warehouses nearby. Level of communal value: medium/high.

5.0 Proposals and Impact

Proposals are detailed on the accompanying drawings and comprise the following:

Conversion of vacant upper floors of Grade II property from learning use to 12 no. apartments.

Upgrade and repair of fabric to increase energy efficiency.

Retention, revealing and restoration of features of significance, including terrazzo floors, timber panelled walls and sash windows.

Creation of internal refuse and bike storage areas.

External repairs.

The conservation philosophy is based on retaining as much historic fabric as possible, maintaining the existing character of compartmentalised spaces linked by corridors. The entrance, lightwell and circulation core will remain with minor alterations, preserving the plan form as far as possible.

Several features which repeat throughout the floors and overarching strategies have been considered for these elements, as detailed below.

UPPER FLOORS, FLOORING

Existing: Few features to floor, which is historic timber boarding, though limited areas of parquet exist to some parts.

Significance: Moderate but with no special features and altered/repared in several areas.

Proposal: It is necessary to upgrade thermal and acoustic properties between apartments. The options involve additional build up to either the floors or to the ceilings. Of the two, the floor build up is less harmful, avoiding clashes with ceiling details, which are more extensive and of higher significance than the skirtings.

Impact: Minor, adverse. Floor surfaces will be built up as described above but original floors will be retained and protected beneath the new floor and can be re-exposed at a later date. The spatial dimensions of the rooms will not be altered in any significant way. In mitigation, the floor build up is considered less harmful than covering of ceilings.



Images 16, 17, 18: Typical ceiling cornicing, evidencing historic room layout; typical examples of partitions with timber panels and painted glass, forming internal corridors.

CEILINGS

Existing: The ceilings appear to be mostly lath and plaster, with limited decorative features, though cornicing is present in several areas (see drawings).

Significance: The ceilings have significance as original fabric, though their heritage value is limited. Decorative cornicing has some aesthetic quality and is typical of the period. It has some evidential value in identifying former room sizes.

Proposal: Repair and retain ceilings at existing heights. Retain and repair cornices where possible. Service routes will be suspended from ceilings. This is a common approach in listed buildings and will avoid the boxing in which could obscure views of original features. Minimal fixings will be used for service runs, requiring limited penetrations through fabric.

Impact: Negligible and reversible.

PANELLED WALLS

Existing: Internal partitions are a mixture of timber and glass, previously forming office walls and allowing for light and visual permeability. Tongue and groove low level panels and glazed panels to the top (back painted white) are present. They are of a low quality, though they are evidence of former use and adaptation throughout the 19th and 20th century. Panels create corridors which are an important part of the plan form and have evidential value.

Significance: Moderate- high in terms of plan form, but lower in some areas which have suffered from repair, alteration, and a degree of loss.

Proposals: To remove paint on glass and repair and retain panelling where possible, with an additional stud partition to one side, enabling fire protection. Glass windows to be backlit within void. In instances where layouts cannot be made to work, limited sections of panelling will be removed. Due to the poor quality, tongue and groove panels will be over-boarded with a thin newly decorated timber panel.

Impact: Moderate beneficial, where fabric is retained and repaired. Minor adverse where small sections are to be removed. In mitigation these sections are limited, and the majority of panelled divisions throughout the building will remain. Over boarding will retain the timber panels beneath new and ensure the corridor form is kept.



Images 19, 20, 21: Showing typical sash windows (upper floors), example of internal windows from stair well to inner office, and view of later date metal framed windows at first floor (to be replaced).

WINDOWS

Existing: The windows are a key component of the elevations and the majority have timber frames and original sashes, with some altered. The windows to the first floor are metal framed and do not match overall fenestration pattern or materials. They are later alterations.

Significance: Medium/High to originals, lower to alterations and replacement.

Proposals: 4th floor: Existing timber frames to be retained and secondary glazing added internally; 3rd floor: Removal of non-original, non-opening casement, and reinstate opening sashes with double glazed units with design to match floors 4 and 2. Secondary glazing to be added if necessary; 2nd floor: retain and refurbish existing timber frames and add secondary glazing internally; 1st floor: Remove metal framed windows and replace with timber framed sashes with double glazed units, add secondary glazing if necessary. Secondary glazing frames avoid visual clashes with external window frame so as to be as inconspicuous as possible whilst achieving the required thermal and acoustic levels.

Impact: Moderate beneficial. Use of timber sashes throughout is a return to historic form. The proposed design of the first-floor windows is suitably harmonising with floors above and will ensure upper floor elevations are uniform in style at per original intent. Secondary glazing will ensure that timber sashes can be used/retained. Metal frames are historic but not original and their loss is not considered harmful to significance.

INTERNAL WINDOWS

Existing: To the stair core walls, there are large windows, looking into the adjoining internal rooms these are timber framed with glass.

Significance: Moderate. Originally intended to allow for visual connectivity and shared light, these windows are part of the 19th century fabric.

Proposals: To provide privacy within the new spaces, these windows require alteration. Glass and frames will be retained, an opaque film added, and a new wall inserted behind. The glass will be backlit from within the void, creating a feature.

Impact: Neutral. Whilst the visual permeability is altered, the glass and frames remain and are protected and can be read as features. The proposal is reversible.



Images 22, 23, 24: Showing original door with recessed panels; modern replica door flush face with added frames; detail of typical deep and high skirting.

NON-ORIGINAL PARTITION WALLS

Existing: Several additional partition walls have been inserted over previous years and date from the later part of the 20th century.

Significance: None. Non-original with no special features and poor quality in places.

Proposal: To be removed.

Impact: Minor beneficial.

A number of new walls are required to form the apartments and create separation. These have been positioned to avoid clashes with windows. In instances where there is no alternative, the new walls abut existing walls and ceilings and will be scribed in elevation to fit around decorative detail such as coving. As far as possible, new partitions have been kept to a minimum and over sub-division has been avoided to maintain original character of plan form.

Impact: Minor, neutral.

ORIGINAL WALLS

Existing: Original walls, with features limited to decorative skirting boards and cornicing, in places.

Significance: Important as part of original fabric and structure. Evidential and historical value.

Proposal: Retain with minimal new openings inserted where necessary. New openings will not mimic historic detailing and will be plain in form so as to be recognisable as modern intervention.

Impact: Minor adverse where fabric is lost. In mitigation removal is limited and the majority of walls will remain in place. Openings are required to re-purpose the space and will be identifiable as modern alterations to avoid confused reading of the spaces.

INTERNAL DOORS

Existing: Timber multi-panelled doors. Most appear original, with some later additions.

Significance: Moderate, with limited significance to later replicas which are of a noticeably lower quality.

Proposal: Retain and repair original doors. Where apartment layouts require doors to be blocked, they will be kept and fastened shut. Low quality modern doors will be removed as they are having an adverse impact upon significance. Where replacements are required, these will be contemporary and sympathetic, referencing the historic, but avoiding pastiche and replica versions.

Impact: Minor positive. Removal of low-quality doors is beneficial. Replacement with high contemporary versions is seen as enhancement.



Images 25, 26, 27: Showing non-original metal screen to entrance; ceiling detail to entrance; terrazzo flooring present to entrance area floor.

TOILETS AND KITCHENS

Existing: Non-original kitchen and toilet facilities are present in several locations throughout the building. All have modern, low-quality fittings.

Significance: None

Proposal: To be removed.

Impact: Minor, positive. Removal of non-original fabric which does not contribute to significance.

ENTRANCE AREA

Existing: Decorative plaster and cornices to ceiling. Modern metal framed screen with glass. Above and below the stairs and on the entrance stairs, there is an original terrazzo floor, in green and cream and previously covered with various modern finishes. This is an historic feature. Significance: Ceilings have moderate significance, modern metal framed screen has no heritage value, terrazzo flooring is of moderate heritage value.

Proposals: Metal screen to be removed and replaced with frameless glass alternative. Terrazzo retained, restored and re-exposed to majority of area and removed in limited area to allow for fitting of access lift (right hand side stairs). Decorative ceilings retained and repaired. Impact: Loss of non-original feature (screen) minor positive. New glazed screen will have minimal visual impact on entrance, ensuring the view of ceiling is retained, and will be positioned to avoid ceiling decoration. Loss of small area of terrazzo flooring is a minor adverse impact, but in mitigation this is limited and necessary to meet access requirements. The retention and restoration of the greater portion of terrazzo floor is a moderate positive.

RISERS

Fitting of risers throughout the building is required, in order to service apartments. This will involve inserting 3 vertical runs in 2 central locations, within spaces opposite the lightwell. Please see drawings for positioning. The scale of affected historic floor is minimal, with a low level of adverse impact. In mitigation, openings are as small as possible to fit requirements. The less than substantial harm is considered justified on the basis that these interventions are a requirement in order to convert the building to residential use and secure the wider benefit of long-term re-use of the property.



Image 28: Showing part of Back Piccadilly elevation, with two small lower windows to be removed to allow for new bin access doors.

BIN STORE ACCESS ROUTE

A new bin store will serve the needs of apartments, requiring the addition of a platform lift between ground and basement floors.

Existing: Back Piccadilly elevation has small sized windows in 2 pairs. They are considered unlikely to be original. Brick work is historic fabric, but with no significant features and already altered.

Significance: Limited

Impact: The loss of internal floor and external fabric is considered to be low adverse. In mitigation, the opening has been sited on the Back Piccadilly, a narrow side-street and not a principal elevation. This elevation has already been subject to extensive re-working and alteration. The inappropriate steel shuttering will be removed from the existing doorway to the left which will improve the aesthetic qualities of the street level façade. The loss of fabric is to be kept to a minimum to serve the bins and is unavoidable if a clear route is to be created. The overall impact of creating a neater elevation is considered to be a positive and to outweigh the limited adverse impact of creating a new opening.

6.0 Planning Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated 2021, sets out Government planning policy for England and how it is expected to be applied. There are specific sections which have particular relevance, in heritage terms.

Paragraph 194 requires applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets, including the contribution made by their settings. This statement provides that.

Paragraph 197 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The proposals within this application will sustain the significance identified within this document. The re-use of the building, securing its viable long-term future is a positive response to sustainable development. The changes will ensure the character and distinctiveness of the asset are retained and enhanced, externally and internally.

Paragraph 199 states, 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'

The changes are considered to be beneficial in most instances. The most significant elements and qualities are to be retained. Overall, the proposals will ensure the conservation of the asset and protection of its significance.

Paragraph 202 states, 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'

There are limited numbers of adverse impact on significance, where small amounts of original fabric are to be removed. In these cases, mitigation has been undertaken to keep that loss as minimal as possible. Priority has been given to retaining and protecting significant features and care taken to retain character and fabric wherever possible. The degree of less than substantial harm is considered to be greatly outweighed by the positive benefit of securing an optimum new use for the asset, safeguarding its long-term future.

7.0 Conclusion

The proposed changes consist of limited instances of low-level adverse harm, where historic fabric is to be removed. The majority of alterations are considered to be an enhancement and to have a major positive impact upon significance, removing low quality non-original elements and adding high quality contemporary intervention.

NPPF states that any degree of harm must be justified and outweighed by public benefit. The building has been vacant in the past few years and identifying the optimum re-use is considered crucial to securing its long-term future. The conversion to apartments is acknowledged as a viable solution to keeping the property in use, maintaining the listed asset for the future, and making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

The existing compartmentalisation of the floors lends itself to division to apartments more readily than modern office use, which is more likely to require open plan floor plates. The external elevations (of highest significance) will be enhanced with inappropriate windows replaced and the side elevation additions rationalised to form a neater façade to Back Piccadilly. The scheme is considered to respond positively to the existing historic fabric and plan form and design mitigation has been undertaken to ensure the new use works within the constraints of the significant fabric and qualities of the listed building. Proposals are a positive response to local and national policy.



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