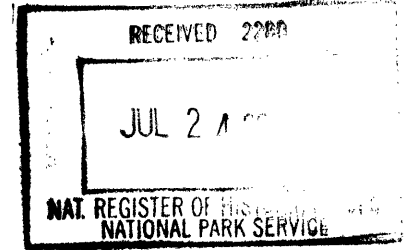


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



959

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building

other name/site number Vista Theater, Desert Star Playhouse, J.C. Penney Store

2. Location

street & town 4861 South State Street not for publication

city or town Murray vicinity

state Utah code UT county Salt Lake code 035 zip code 84107

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property

meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 7/10/2001
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**Entered in the
National Register**

9/7/01

Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building
Name of Property

Salt Lake County, Utah
City, County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- district
- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 2 | 1 | buildings |
| _____ | _____ | sites |
| _____ | _____ | structures |
| _____ | _____ | objects |
| 2 | 1 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic Resources of Murray City, Utah, 1850-1950

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater _____

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store _____

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store _____

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling _____

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater _____

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store _____

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store _____

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco _____

Other: Two-part Commercial Block _____

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

ASPHALT (built-up)

roof _____

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building
Name of Property

Salt Lake County, Utah
City, County and State

8. Description

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

COMMERCE

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1930-1950

Significant Dates

1930

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

Murray City Corporation

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building
Name of Property

Salt Lake County, Utah
City, County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.31 acres

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/2 4/2/5/0/2/0 4/5/0/1/8/6/0
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

BEG 8.66 CHS S & 12.66 CHS E FR NW COR SEC 7 TS2 R1E SL MER; E 316.4 FT M OR L S 59.4 FT M OR L S 84 (degree)W 13.5 FT S 173 FT W 291.3 FT N 236.28 FT TO BEG LESS ST. 1.31 ACRES

Property Tax No. 22-07-106-007

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries are those that are currently associated with the property, and historically associated with the property since 1930 when the Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building was constructed. Two other buildings are also on the property and are owned by the same party: the Warenski-Duvall Commercial Building and Apartments (built in 1915) and the J.C. Penney Store (built in 1955). The former building was listed on the National Register in 2000. The latter building is currently considered non-historic and non-contributing.

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Korral Broschinsky

organization Murray City Historic Preservation Advisory Board (CLG)

date November 3, 2000

street & number P.O. Box 58766

telephone (801) 581-1497

city or town Salt Lake City

state UT zip code 84158

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name/title Michael J. Todd, Affordable Housing Alliance LC

street & number 4861 South State

telephone (435) 640-1080

city or town Murray

state UT zip code 84107

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 1

Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building, Murray, Salt Lake County, UT

Narrative Description

The Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building, built in 1930, is a two-part commercial block, constructed of brick in the Art Deco style. The building façade is faced with a maroon-colored, striated brick, with softer brick on the side and rear elevations. The building sits on a concrete foundation and has an asphalt built-up roof. The commercial style façade consists of two storefront spaces flanking the central theater entrance. The theater lobby is a long narrow space leading to the auditorium in the rear.

Eighteen studio and one-bedroom apartments are on the second floor. The Art Deco architectural details of the façade include the angular vertical parapet with a contrasting parapet cap. The building is located at 4861 South State Street and abuts two-story brick commercial buildings on either side. A sidewalk and two trees are located along State Street. A large parking lot is at the rear of the property. The building has recently undergone a rehabilitation to bring the building up to code and restore the building's historic storefronts. The apartments were rehabilitated for use as low-income housing. The Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building is in excellent condition and is a contributing resource in Murray's historic downtown.

The footprint of the Iris building is roughly L-shaped with 16,000 square feet of space on two floors. It is divided into two connected blocks, the retail storefronts and theater entrance to the west, and the theater auditorium to the east. The auditorium, oriented on a north-south axis, is accessed from the front, and also from a rear lobby entrance. Above the theater lobby and retail spaces are the eighteen apartments grouped around central light well on the roof. The apartments are accessed from a staircase at the rear entrance; and in the front, from a door in the southwest corner of the Iris building, up a stair built between the Iris and the adjoining building to the south. The elevator is located near the rear entrance to the apartments. The built-up roof slopes down to the east and has interior drains. Exterior walls are constructed of brick three-wythes thick.

The primary (west) elevation has been faced with a high-quality striated brick laid in a running bond with raked mortar joints. All other elevations and inner walls were constructed of a softer brick. At the center of the façade is the recessed theater entrance with a projecting marquee. The vertical element of the marquee was removed in the 1960s and other alterations were made in the 1970s and 1990s. The tiled floor and rough stuccoed walls of the lobby entrance are also later alterations. The theater entrance is flanked by two storefronts. The larger storefront, approximately 44 feet wide, is located to the north, with the smaller, approximately 24 feet wide, is on the south. Both storefronts were altered substantially between the 1950s and 1980s. Modifications included the removal of historic storefront-display and fixed-frame transom windows, doors and frames. Panels, signage and awnings were also altered. The current rehabilitation includes the removal of all non-historic materials. The storefronts were repaired and refitted with windows, doors, panels, signage and awnings similar to those shown in 1930s historic photographs. Upper floor windows are vinyl-clad

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 2

Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building, Murray, Salt Lake County, UT

wood similar to the original one-over-one double-hung windows. Window openings have brick soldier headers and rowlock sills. Because the Iris building abuts its neighbors only a few apartment windows are visible on the north and south elevations. The auditorium elevations are completely windowless. The northern portion of the east elevation has a few windows on the upper and lower levels.

On the interior, the building has approximately 9,000 square feet of space on the main floor, 3,000 square feet of mezzanine space and 4,250 square feet of space on the second floor. The main floor consists of a slightly sloped entrance hall to the theater lobby, the auditorium and backstage area, two retail spaces, a small office and restrooms. Prior to the rehabilitation, there were two mezzanines in the rear of both retail spaces. Front mezzanines were removed sometime between 1956 and the 1970s. During the rehabilitation, the mezzanine in both spaces was enlarged. In the theater area, there is a projection room above the lobby, and a small mezzanine loft above the new auditorium entrance (formerly the women's restroom). The second floor consists of fifteen one-bedroom and three studio apartments. The corridor is circular on the interior of the building. A light well/roof terrace brings light into the interior apartments. The rehabilitation of these apartments included new finishes, fixtures and full HVAC systems. The rehabilitation also added managerial office space, a laundry room, and a few storage units.

The Iris building sits in the middle of a 1.31 acre parcel of land along State Street. Two adjoining buildings, the Warenski-Duvall Commercial Building and Apartments (built in 1915, National Register listed, 2000), and a former J.C. Penney store (built in 1955), also occupy the parcel. Landscaping is limited to two trees in planters flush with the sidewalk along the west (State Street) elevation. Paved parking is found east of the auditorium. A service alley is located between the Iris building auditorium and the rear of the Warenski-Duvall building. The rehabilitation will include landscaping the alley to provide a recreation space for the apartment tenants.

The Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building is located in the middle of Murray City's historic downtown. The area along State Street between 4800 South and Vine Street was once the commercial and civic center of Murray. Existing buildings in the neighborhood range from brick commercial buildings built beginning in the 1880s to new commercial strip construction from the 1980s. The Iris building is one of only a handful of historic two-story brick commercial buildings left in the area, and the only one built in the distinctive Art Deco style. The building is in good condition and contributes to the historic resources of Murray City.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 1

Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building, Murray, Salt Lake County, UT

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building, built in 1930, is a two-part commercial block, brick building and is significant under Criterion A & C. The Iris building is significant under Criterion A for its role in the urbanization of Murray City. With its combination of entertainment, retail, and residential space, the building represents an elaborate example of the multi-use commercial block common during the early twentieth-century development of the city's commercial business district. The building was owned by the Duvall family who managed the theater while living in the apartments above the storefronts. The Iris building is also significant under Criterion C as the only commercial building in Murray built in the Art Deco style. Though not a particularly ornate example of the style, the building makes a distinctive contribution to the State Street frontage of Murray's downtown commercial district. The building is in good condition and is a contributing historic resource of the city. The building is being nominated as part of the Multiple Property Nomination, *Historic Resources of Murray City, 1850-1950*.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

History of Murray City

Murray has undergone four major periods of development. The first was a period of agrarian settlement lasting from 1848 to 1869. The second was an industrial boom following the coming of the railroad and the establishment of several smelters in the area. Though agriculture continued in Murray for some time, the agrarian economy was increasingly supplanted by industry and commerce. This period lasted from 1870 to 1931, the year the Great Depression reached Murray. This period also included the beginning of a community-building period after Murray's incorporation in 1902. The third period of development began with the depression and ended in 1950. The year 1950 marked the closure of the last smelter in the city, and also coincided with the transformation of the city from an independent industrial town to a bedroom community for nearby Salt Lake City. As the "hub of the Salt Lake Valley," the city's motto for many decades, Murray City's last period of development has seen the steady increase in subdivision and retail development that currently characterizes most of the Salt Lake Valley's outlying communities.

Due to the mixed nature of the city's economy and building stock, the historic contexts for the Multiple Property Nomination group the city's historic resources by property type. The Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building is significant under three contexts: *Americanization of Murray's*

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 2

Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building, Murray, Salt Lake County, UT

Residential Architecture, 1902 – 1950; Religious and Social Buildings of Murray, 1850 – 1950; and Industrial and Commercial Buildings of Murray, 1869 – 1950.

The Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building is a transitional building in the context of Murray City's development. This building represents the changes brought to the economic and social structure of the community in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Between 1902 and the 1930s, commercial buildings lined State Street from 4700 South to 5000 South. Most of these businesses were owned by second-generation Mormons who had left their farms for more lucrative employment, though some were owned by immigrant families originally brought to Murray by the smelter industry. By the 1920s and 1930s, entrepreneurs were opening various businesses along State Street in Murray. Many of these people follow the tradition of living in apartments above their businesses, creating an urban atmosphere in a relatively rural community. Downtown Murray was the civic and commercial center of the city until a suburban mall was built in 1972 at the south end of the city, which hastened the demise of the city's historic downtown.

History of the Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building:

The land on which the Iris building sits was originally patented to Edward Charles and Susannah Aldian Warenski, immigrants from Poland and England respectively who settled in Salt Lake City in the 1860s. By the turn of the century, Edward, Susannah and their children were living in Murray and owned most of the block between 4800 South and Vine Street, east of State Street. Their son, Edward James Warenski, owned a brick home at 4841 South State and operated a grocery store and saloon just to the south. Edward J. Warenski was married to Emma Letta Walton. The couple had seven children born to them between 1896 and 1914, all in Murray. In 1909, Edward C. and Susannah deeded the parcel of land where the grocery store was located to Edward James. The younger Warenski demolished the old general store and built a two-story brick commercial building on the site in 1915. By the time the 1920 census was taken, Edward J. was listed as a "retired merchant" living at his home. On June 6, 1923, Edward J. and Emma Warenski sold the commercial building and an accompanying parcel of land to John W. Johnson.¹ Edward J. died on October 18, 1834, and Emma died on November 24, 1955.

After acquiring the Warenski building, John Johnson and his brother-in-law, Tony Duvall, remodeled the upper floor into apartments. Tony Duvall also built and managed the Gem Theatre just to the north of the Warenski building. The Gem Theatre was a one-story brick building resembling a small castle with a ticket booth in the center of the facade, a small lobby, and an auditorium with a piano for use during silent movies. After the introduction of "talkies" in 1927, movie theaters changed dramatically. Tony Duvall responded to the changes by razing the Gem Theatre and building a new

¹ John William Johnson and his wife Marguerite Duvall Johnson were managers of the Iris Theatre in Midvale. In the Murray venture, they had the help of Marguerite's mother Minnie Torrance Duvall and Marguerite's brother Freeman Torrance "Tony" Duvall. The Johnsons and Duvalls had been briefly involved with the Iris Theatre in Murray located at about 4981 South State sometime around 1918. This theater was taken over by Frank Burgener and Louis Walters in 1919. This theater was no longer operating by the time the new Iris Theater was built at 4861 South State Street in 1930.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building, Murray, Salt Lake County, UT

structure on the site in 1930. The Art Deco-style building was called the Iris Theatre. The building had a central theater entrance flanked by two storefronts and a large auditorium in the rear. The upper floor of the Iris consisted of sixteen apartments, two-bedroom units for the Tony Duvall, his wife Marguerite, and their two children, and one-bedroom and studio units for tenants. Like the Duvalls, many early residents of the Iris apartments were families with small children. Most of the people who lived in the apartments worked in the downtown in retail and service industries, a few were civil servants and professionals.

The Iris was considered state-of-the-art at the time. The theater showed both blockbusters (e.g. "Gone with the Wind"), and more obscure fare (e.g. some Thursday nights were reserved for Swedish movies shown especially for Swedish immigrants brought to Murray by the smelters). The theater had a stage where local groups could mount theatrical productions. The Iris Theater was a community place. Murray firemen sometimes held conventions there. Many of Murray's youths, including the Duvall children, worked in the theater.² During the depression, Tony Duvall would sometimes let children see a movie in exchange for scrap metal, or sometimes simply for free. Tony Duvall, with partner Joe Lawrence, later built the Murray Theater at 4961 South State, which is still standing, but currently vacant. In the 1940s, the Iris would close during the summer while movies were shown in the larger (and cooler) Murray Theater.

The north retail space was built for the J.C. Penney Company, which had been at various locations in Murray since 1910. The space was designed similar to other Penney's stores with retail mezzanine in the rear and an office mezzanine in the front.³ The south retail space was originally leased to the Thomas Martin General Merchandise Company. By 1937, the Winger Electric Company was leasing the space. The Duvall family continued managing the complex of theater, retail space, and apartments until the early 1950s. The property and both buildings were sold to Syd Horman Construction in

1954, and Tony and Marguerite Duvall moved to Salt Lake City. Marguerite Duvall died in 1960 and Tony Duvall died in 1978.

In 1955, Syd Horman built a new store north for the J.C. Penney company. The department store moved into the new building and in 1956, the façade of the Iris received the first of several remodelings. The north retail space of the Iris building subsequently housed the Catalina Sewing Company and prior to rehabilitation, Sherry's Antiques. The south space occupants included a waterbed store, a self-defense studio, and most recently, Jolene's Square Dance. In 1960, the building was sold to Afton Melville and remained in the Melville family until 1998. Sometime during the 1960s, the Iris Theater was remodeled and renamed the Vista Theater. It remained the Vista Theater until 1989 when it became a dinner theater called the Desert Star Playhouse.

² Richard Duvall, Tony's son, recalls that most of his friends worked at the theater at some time, including several sons of Nathan and Henrietta Bankhead, one of Murray's few African-American families.

³ Richard Duvall remembers the cup-like containers on a pulley that took patrons' money from the retail floor to the office mezzanine and returned with change and sales receipts.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 8 Page 4

Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building, Murray, Salt Lake County, UT

The Desert Star Playhouse began by producing melodramas, but quickly found a niche in producing musical spoofs and variety shows. In early 1998 the Affordable Housing Alliance, under the direction of Michael Todd, owner of the Desert Star Playhouse, purchased the property with its three buildings (the Iris, the Warenski-Duvall, and the 1955 Penney's store). The Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial building has recently undergone a rehabilitation. Mr. Todd is planning on using rehabilitation income tax credits to restore the historic storefronts, convert the sub-standard apartments into refinished low-income housing, and make the entire complex more ADA and code compliant.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Referred to by some as the "zigzag" phase of Art Moderne, the Art Deco style was popular in Utah between 1930 and 1940. The best Utah examples are ornate municipal buildings with hard lines, angular geometric patterning, and crenellated parapets. Ornamentation was usually in contrasting terra cotta, cast concrete or exposed painted metals. The Iris building is the only commercial building in Murray to be built in the Art Deco style. The main features of the façade are the crenellated parapets with contrasting cap, and the geometric lines of the brick corbelling and colossal piers. With its combination of entertainment, retail, and residential space, the Iris building is a relatively complex example of a multi-use commercial building. The architect of the building is unknown, although the original owners' family members participated in the actual construction. Though a modest example of the Art Deco style, the Iris building is a distinctive part of Murray's historic downtown.

Two other historic theaters are extant in Murray. The first Iris Theater located at 4973 South State, built circa 1918, in an eclectic castellated style. The building is in fair condition, though the storefront has been altered. The auditorium and upper floor apartments were converted to retail space in the late 1920s. The other theater is the Murray Theater, built in 1938 and located at 4961 South State. The Murray Theater is the only commercial building in the city in the Art Moderne style. No apartments were associated with it, though it did have some modest commercial space. The Murray Theater was only used for showing movies. The building is in good condition, but is currently vacant.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 9 Page 1

Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building, Murray, Salt Lake County, UT

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. PHOTOS Page 1 Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building, Murray, Salt Lake County, UT

Common Label Information:

1. Iris Theater, Apartments and Commercial Building
2. Murray, Salt Lake County, Utah
3. Photographer: Korral Broschinsky
4. Date: October 2000
5. Negative on file at Utah SHPO.

Photo No. 1:

6. West elevation of building. Camera facing east.

Photo No. 2:

6. West elevation of building. Camera facing northeast.

Photo No. 3:

6. West elevation of building and streetscape. Camera facing northeast.

Photo No. 4:

6. East elevation of building. Camera facing west.
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