

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received DEC 6 1984

date entered FEB 21 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Fuller House

and/or common same

**2. Location**

street & number 2317 Ashmead Place, N.W. \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Washington, D.C. NA vicinity of

state NA code county NA code

**3. Classification**

| Category  | Ownership                                   | Status  | Present Use                            |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture   | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                 | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial    | <input type="checkbox"/> park                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress           | <input type="checkbox"/> educational   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> religious                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | n/a in process                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government    | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific                   |
|   | n/a being considered                        | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted          | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation               |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military      | <input type="checkbox"/> other:                       |

**4. Owner of Property**

name Dr. Gar Alperovitz

street & number 2317 Ashmead Place, N.W.

city, town Washington, D.C. \_\_\_ vicinity of NA state NA

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds

street & number 5th and D Street, N.W.

city, town Washington, D.C. state

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title none has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved      date

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

2317 Ashmead Place, N.W. is a two-story, brick and frame residential building built in 1893. D.C. building permit #1013 dated October 26, 1893 records the construction of the house on Lot 20 (n.b. incorrectly noted) of Truesdell's Addition, a sub-division of Washington Heights. The house was designed by owner Thomas J.D. Fuller, an 1892 graduate of Cornell University School of Architecture, as the home for his young family.

The house is a classic example of the Arts and Crafts movement of architecture popular in England from 1890-1914. It is designed in the style known as Free Style, an approach characterized by its free interpretation and organization of the academic and vernacular traditions of Britain into original compositions. This house illustrates the style particularly well, combining the symmetry and balance typical to the Georgian style with the charm and traditional features reminiscent of English vernacular design. Its detailing is boldly executed. Strong forms enrich the composition as they elegantly tie the various materials and features together. It is an accomplished design that illustrates an skilled handling of a style accompanied by high quality craftsmanship. In addition, its early date (1893) in this country is significant for its concurrence with the style's popularity in England.

The house faces north onto Ashmead Place. When the house was built, this street was known as Connecticut Avenue Extended. Kalorama was an open area and this house was one of only a handful of buildings in the vicinity and possibly the first to be constructed in the new subdivided area. It is set across the entire width of its lot and once enjoyed a siting amidst adjacent open land also owned by Fuller. Today, it is abutted on the west by a large apartment building and on the east it is separated from a double house only by a narrow driveway.

Three bays wide, the house is massed as a rectangle in both plan and bulk. It is 44 feet wide and 40 feet deep. It has a two main stories, a full attic, and a cellar. A two-story ell with gabled roof projects to the south at the western end of the rear elevation. A shallow, one-story projection extends from this ell. (The original plan featured a second ell, one story high, projecting from the eastern end of the rear elevation; it was demolished in 1942.)

The composition of the house is delineated by form, color and texture. A strong horizontal division of the elevations is created by the change in materials: red brick with glazed headers laid in Flemish bond at the first story, smooth stucco facing the second story, surmounted by the roof's wide expanse of slate. Wooden shingles are introduced within the roof gables and at the rear where the eastern ell was removed. A strongly pronounced belt course paired with a string course runs around the building distinguishing the

(see attached continuation sheets)

## 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian    |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation  |  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |  |

**Specific dates** 1893

**Builder/Architect** Thomas Fuller, Architect and Builder

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Fuller House at 2317 Ashmead Place, N.W. represents a significant example of the influence of the English Arts and Crafts movement on residential architecture in the United States. It was designed in 1893 in Free Style, an architectural expression that enjoyed popularity in Great Britain from 1890 to the First World War. The house embodies the distinguishing characteristics of the Free Style and is, in fact, an early example of the style's development in the 1890's integrating the Georgian tradition. The building demonstrates both stylistic knowledge and technical skill. It is particularly important as an early manifestation of Free Style in this country, representing a contemporaneous transference of stylistic ideals across the Atlantic, and can be seen as a prototype for similar later designs in Washington and its environs. Secondly, the house is important as the work of Washington architect Thomas J.D. Fuller. It is one of his earliest, if not the earliest, executed designs and illustrates a high level of stylistic knowledge and design skill. Thirdly, the house is valuable as one of the first houses in Washington Heights (now Kalorama). As a significant example of a style, for its association with an accomplished architect and citizen, and for its value as part of the development and history of the District of Columbia, the Fuller House was designated as a landmark of the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board has recommended the Fuller House for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the following reasons:

1. Essentially unaltered from its original appearance, the Fuller House is an important example of English Free Style design that possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association.
2. Designed by prominent local architect Thomas J.D. Fuller, whose architectural and civic contributions to Washington were notable, as his own residence, it is associated with a person significant in Washington's past.
3. As an excellent and prototypical example of the English Free Style by a significant architect, it embodies distinctive characteristics of a style and period of design, possesses high artistic value, and represents the work of a master.

(see attached continuation sheets)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Washington West

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

West side of 20th Street, N.W., Square 2540, Lot 21

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title

organization Traceries

date April 4, 1984

street & number 1606 20th St., N.W.

telephone 202-462-0333

city or town Washington, D.C.

state

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Carol B. Thompson*

title

date

11/19/84

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*John A. Burns*  
Keeper of the National Register

date

2/21/85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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first and second story, while deep eaves accentuate the division between the second story and the roof level. Abundant enriched wooden trim painted white accentuates the composition. The slate bell cast roof with wide eaves and three gabled dormers is a distinctive feature. Three molded brick chimneys are placed asymmetrically within the plan.

The three-bay facade is organized symmetrically, focused around a central doorway. This central feature of the facade composition is a finely carved wooden Georgian-style doorway featuring a swan's neck pediment. At the center of the pediment is an urn. The door features a simple entablature supported by shallow pilasters. The distinctive paneled wooden door has a large glass area of elongated tracery in its upper half. This ornamental work, distinctly Arts and Crafts in motif, contrasts with the Georgian elements surrounding the door. At the second story level, directly above the door, is a Palladian window. Its central section has been fitted with a paneled wooden door and a balustrade is set across the lower portion.

A pair of 12/12, double-hung sash windows with louvered shutters are located to either side of the entrance and, above, two bowed oriel windows flank the Palladian window. These two oriel windows are of especially fine design and craftsmanship, and form a distinguished feature of the composition. Their design is extremely similar to windows found on Hampstead Towers (London, England), an 1875-76 design by Richard Norman Shaw. The gently bowed windows are particularly elegant in their form and delicacy. A center portion contains a casement window with a semi-circular fanlight above. Fixed side panels curve back to the plane of the facade and, like the arched window, are composed of tiny panes of glass set into thin muntins. The center section is flanked by pilasters. Strongly molded wood trim runs across the window tying the side and central windows together. Three large gabled dormers are set into the steep pitch of the roof at the cornice line. Each dormer holds two narrow, multi-paned casement windows. The rake of the dormer gable has a pronounced molding. These features work together to provide vertical emphasis to the facade composition.

The east (side) elevation is devoid of windows on the first and second stories, but continues the facade motifs and organization. The roof gable at both this elevation and at the west elevation is faced with wooden shingles and features a large Palladian window opening at the attic story. The west (side) elevation, also of brick in Flemish bond with stucco above, holds a single window in the front bay (opening from the dining room) at the first story. A second window opening set into the rear bay (from the kitchen) has been bricked in.

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The south (rear) elevation also features brick at the first story and stucco above. A large tripartite, rectangular window set with a grid of muntins is centrally placed on this facade indicating the location of the interior stairway. Alterations, including the removal of a small, one-story wing, have changed the rear appearance.

The interior\* arrangement is based on a center hall plan. The wide central hall holds the entry foyer and elegant stair, as well as a passage hall across the rear portion. Flanking the center hall are the parlor to the east and the dining room and kitchen to the west. The second floor holds four bedrooms and two baths. With the exception of the kitchen and baths, the interior plan and detailing appear intact to its original 1893 design. In the tradition of the Arts and Crafts movement, the interior detailing carries the exterior motifs throughout the house. Particularly noteworthy are the staircase with a dividing stair, the hall paneling, the four fireplaces (parlor, dining room, two bedrooms), the leaded glass bookcases in the parlor, the dining room paneling, the paneled doors and cornice moldings throughout.

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\*The interior is not nominated for landmark status.

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THE FREE STYLE OF THE FULLER HOUSE

Development of Free Style in England

The Free Style is a result of a conscious attempt to devise a new style of architecture. It is a style that addressed a desire to create new form and organization while maintaining a tie to English building tradition. An outgrowth of the Arts and Crafts Movement founded by William Morris and Philip Webb, the earliest version of Free Style can be seen in the work of Richard Norman Shaw. It was his own residence, Hampstead Towers (1875-76, London, England), a synthesis of traditional English features into an asymmetrical composition, that first exhibited the ideas that would become associated with the new style. In 1884, architects William Lethaby and Edward Prior helped found the Art Workers' Guild that would be the spiritual base for the Free Style. In a paper presented before the British Architectural Association in 1889, Lethaby set forth the architectural ideals of the Guild:

- One, the 'motive' or central thought in design.
- Two, that dignity in realisation we speak of as largeness, breadth, style.
- Three, the use and limits of a study of past art.
- Four, the reference to nature.1/

Lethaby's ideas can be explained to mean 1) that a design should be based on a main idea strong enough to guide its complete development; 2) that this main idea should be articulated consistently throughout the design, inside and out; 3) that historical features should be used in a free and imaginative way, not in a academic or pure revival manner; and 4) that the design should be in harmony with nature, considering both the setting and the materials used.

Indeed, the style that developed featured a free manipulation of forms derived from history, English history. Alistair Service, writing in Edwardian Architecture, states, "Their Arts and Crafts principles discouraged them from ignoring tradition altogether, for one of their ideals was an architecture rooted in the English past, before the adoption of foreign styles began." 2/ At first, historical references were limited to the Perpendicular Gothic, Elizabethan and Jacobean. Then, as respect for Christopher Wren's work re-emerged in the 1880's, the appropriateness was reconsidered. Shaw's return to Wren for inspiration in his 1887-88 design for No. 170 Queen's Gate in Kensington helped to make the integration of Georgian motifs acceptable for the Free Style. By the mid-1890's, Georgian motifs were fully integrated into the style's interpretation. Later, the philosophical foundation of Free Style would reject all historical reference and develop into a completely free style as practiced by such architects as Charles Townsend and Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

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The Fuller House and Free Style

The Fuller House is a classic example of the Free Style. Here, massing, material, and detailing are expertly worked creating a distinctive version presenting an early manifestation of the style's integration of Georgian characteristics. The balance and symmetry inherent to high style Georgian architecture is the background for the free manipulation of academic and traditional elements. Academic renditions of Georgian features, as well as details and elements directly imitating Richard Norman Shaw are used in the composition. The Georgian doorway, complete with swan's neck pediment, is surmounted by a fine Palladian window. The bowed oriel windows, borrowed from Shaw, feature delicate medieval glazing work and molding. The door is accented with tracery in an elongated pattern creating an Arts and Crafts motif. Appropriate to Free Style and the Arts and Crafts Movement in general, the house is fully articulated around the exterior and throughout the interior. This attention to detail, as a realization of the design and the relationship of parts to the whole, is particularly thorough. The craftsmanship evident in the detailing and construction is of a superior quality. The varied materials demonstrate an attention to natural harmony and create a rich textural context for the composition. The scale of the house, suited to its original Washington setting, maintains the English proportions perfectly.

Fuller's early use of the Free Style and particularly his use of details borrowed directly from works by Shaw leads to the speculation that Fuller visited England or, at the very least, saw the published designs of the English Free Style architects. Architectural publications were wide spread and Shaw's work especially was published repeatedly. As a recent graduate of Cornell University School of Architecture, Fuller would have been aware of current architectural thought. However, his notably early and pure stylistic rendition of the Free Style in Washington is significant.

The Fuller House and Concurrent Washington Architecture

Washington in the early 1890's was still ensconced in Victorian architectural ideology. Building design generally held to decorative revival styles stressing verticality. The Fuller House represents a departure from this. The design is based on a more horizontal composition than generally seen. The interior spaces show a balanced ratio of height to width than the high ceilinged rooms of the Victorian period. The wide central hall plan is in contrast to the irregular, compartmentalized plans then prevalent. The careful use of English motifs and the return to symmetry may be interpreted to anticipate the popularity of Georgian Revival seen in the early years of the 20th century.



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The ideas behind the Arts and Crafts Movement exhibited so well in the Fuller House were not unknown to Washington. Buildings such as Hornblower and Marshall's Edmunds House (2111 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., 1885) and the Boardman House (1801 P Street, N.W. 1893), and Harvey Page's exceptional design for the Weeks House (1526 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., 1892), illustrate local interest in new and freer attitudes toward composition, materials, and adaptation of historic motifs. Fuller's contribution is tied to the precision with which he presented the ideas of the English Free Style designers. His thinking was certainly in consonance with the innovative local architects Hornblower and Marshall, and Harvey Page, who were introducing similar concepts of composition and proportion in their work in the city. However, Fuller's design is an exceptionally well-defined example of contemporary English thought, in contrast to presentations of the conceptual ideas behind the Free Style seen in its renditions by the established architects. Further, Fuller's introduction of this careful rendition of the English Free Style is significant for its timely contribution to the physical fabric of the city and, hence, to architectural thought in Washington. Specifically, the Fuller House is a prototype for the fully developed Free Style in the Washington area.

Unfortunately, the influence of the Beaux Arts caught the attention of Washington architects and by the turn of the century, most of the ideas and specific characteristics associated with the Free Style were set aside in favor of this newly introduced style. As the city's residential neighborhoods grew, designs based on the imagery of Free Style did enjoy a resurgence in popularity. Features of the style were used to form the basis for much of Washington's early 20th century detached residential architecture. Revival examples of the Free Style incorporating the Georgian and English vernacular in a single design are seen later in the city, particularly in Kalorama, in upper Northwest neighborhoods developed from 1910 on, and in the suburban development in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The contribution of the Fuller House to the introduction, appreciation and development of the Arts and Crafts Movement should be recognized.

THE ARCHITECT: THOMAS J.D. FULLER

Thomas Fuller was both an accomplished architect and active citizen. He was responsible for the design of a number of large Kalorama homes. This includes this house, 2317 Ashmead Place, N.W., which served as his home from 1893 until his death November 20, 1946.

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Fuller was born in Washington in 1870, the son of Thomas James Duncan Fuller, a U.S. Representative from Maine for four terms, 1850-58. He attended Brookville Academy in Olney, Maryland and then went on to Cornell University to earn his Bachelor of Science in architecture, graduating in 1892. After college, Fuller married Elizabeth Ashmead Schaffer of Iowa City, Iowa and returned to Washington. They had four children: Thomas J.D., Jr., born August 6, 1893; Charles Ashmead, born October 10, 1894; Evelyn Schuyler, born June 12, 1897; and Elizabeth, born July 26, 1899, died November 11, 1905. 3/

In 1893 at the age of 23, Fuller and Urias Garrett established the design and construction firm of Fuller and Garrett. He later went to work for the prominent Washington architectural firm of Hornblower and Marshall. Fuller's interest in the Arts and Crafts movement was surely in consonance with the philosophy of Joseph Hornblower and J. Rush Marshall. Their work exhibits many of the ideas and principles of the Free Style using the Romanesque style.

During his tenure with that firm he assisted in two of its most prestigious commissions, the National Museum, now the Museum of Natural History (1904-11), and the Baltimore Custom House (1903-08). Interestingly, these two buildings represent the firm's move away from the Arts and Crafts into the Beaux Arts styles. Edward Donn, Jr., in his unpublished Architectural Reminiscences, refers to Fuller as having held a significant role in the design of the four-story Custom House. Fuller's participation in the design of the National Museum is also described by Donn, "When the firm got the commission to do the New National Museum, a lot of time was taken to study the best solution of the problem. Fuller, [Theodore] Pietsch, Arthur Brown, Morris Leisering all had their hands in it. The final solution to the problem was a composite of these different men."

Among the buildings credited to Fuller are 23-25 Madison Place (the former home of the Cosmos Club, now demolished), 1827 16th Street, N.W., 2439 Wyoming Avenue, N.W. and 2319-21 Ashmead Place, N.W. The massing, materials, and detailing of these buildings are an indication of Fuller's continued appreciation of the ideals of the Arts and Crafts period.

Fuller was actively involved with the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the Washington Architectural Club (WAC), then in its heyday. He served as president and secretary to the AIA chapter between 1895 and 1914, and exhibited in the WAC's annual exhibitions (1893-1913). As a club man, Fuller was instrumental in the founding of one of Washington's most important social groups, the Chevy Chase Club. The idea for the Club was conceived in the office of fellow Washington architect, Harvey L.

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Page. Fuller was one of the last surviving of the original 16 members who directed the organization of the Club. He was also a member of the Cosmos Club and designed the buildings which served as their club house. In 1923-24, he was listed in Who's Who in Washington.

The house remained in the Fuller family until 1973, 80 years after its construction. It served as the residence of its original owner for 53 years, being passed on to his son Thomas Jr. in 1946. Ashmead Fuller, grandson of the architect, was brought up in the house as had been his father before him. His family became the third generation of Fullers to reside there.

KALORAMA: FROM WOODLANDS TO URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

In 1893, the neighborhood now known as Kalorama had just been subdivided by a Philadelphia syndicate. Connecticut Avenue had not been cut through as we know it today. Ashmead Place, then known as Connecticut Avenue Extended, was a minor winding road. Despite elaborate street plans, the streets had not been constructed and sewer lines, water mains and fire hydrants were not to be installed until 1903. Fuller's house stood on lot 21 of George Truesdell's Addition to Washington Heights. In 1887, five years prior to its construction, only a handful of houses dating from the earlier part of the century stood in the whole of Kalorama. In 1893, this house was the first to be constructed on its square and was sited in vacant expanse. It was the first house of its subdivision and maps indicate that it predates all post-subdivision construction in Kalorama. In 1903, the Fuller House remained the sole building on either side of Connecticut Avenue Extended. 4/ When Connecticut Avenue was cut through toward the northwest, the street name was changed to Ashmead Place, a reference to Thomas Fuller's wife Elizabeth Ashmead Schaffer's family. The open countryside appearance of Kalorama in the 1890's, a highly appropriate setting for this house, was altered by the early years of the 20th century. Today, rowhouses and large apartment buildings belie the pastoral beginnings of this neighborhood that might have inspired an English country house design. The Fuller House remains intact, standing along the urban streetscape as a reminder of the early days of the 20th century Kalorama.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1/ Edward W. Donn, Jr. Architectural Reminiscences, unpublished manuscript, America Institute of Architects Library.
- 2/ Alistair Service, Edwardian Architecture. London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, p.41.
- 3/ "Thomas J.D. Fuller, Architect and Native of Washington, Dies," Washington Star, November 20, 1946.
- 4/ Hopkins Map, 1887, Plate 40; Hopkins Map, 1892/3, Vol. III, Plate 7; Baist Map, 1903, Vol. III, Plate 7

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BOOKS AND UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS

Donn, Edward W., Jr. Architectural Reminiscences (unpublished manuscript).  
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