

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**received AUG 9 1983  
date enteredSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections**1. Name**

historic BREWSTER MEMORIAL HALL

and/or common WOLFEBORO TOWN HALL

**2. Location**

street &amp; number South Main Street &amp; Union Streets n/a not for publication

city, town Wolfeboro n/a vicinity of

state N.H. code 33 county Carroll code 003

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
district	public	X occupied	agriculture
X building(s)	X private	unoccupied	commercial
structure	both	work in progress	X educational
site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>		entertainment
object	in process	X yes: restricted	X government
	being considered	yes: unrestricted	industrial
	X N/A	no	military
			other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name John Brewster Trust

street &amp; number 50 Beacon Street

city, town Boston n/a vicinity of state Massachusetts 02108

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Carroll County Complex/Registry of Deeds

street &amp; number Route 171

city, town Ossipee state New Hampshire

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wolfeboro Hist. Pres. Survey has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes X no

date 1980 \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local X local

depository for survey records Lakes Region Planning Commission

city, town Meredith state New Hampshire

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	n/a moved date n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

Brewster Memorial Hall is a large brick building in the Romanesque Revival style, which stands on its own lot at the northeast corner of South Main Street and Union Street in the village of Wolfeboro. The building has a somewhat complex form. The large two-story hip roofed main block has two towers with pyramidal roofs on its Main Street facade, a tall clock tower at the southwestern corner and a shorter three-story tower at the southeastern corner. To the rear of the main block, attached to its northeast corner, but offset to the east, is a one and a half story gable roofed wing with two cross gable roofs which shelter shallow projections. The building was designed for multiple uses--stores and offices in the first story of the main block, a public hall with stage in the second story, and a public library in the rear wing. (The first story of the main block now houses town offices, and the library wing is now used for an elementary school classroom.) The brick walls are laid in common bond, flemish variation, with red cement. The roofs are covered with slate with copper ridge flashings.

We will begin our description with the main block and its Main Street facade with the two towers. The 101 foot high tower at the southwest corner is the building's most prominent feature. Square in plan, the tower stands out from both the west and the south facades, but more from the south facade than from the west wall. A three course offset marks the top of its low base. On the south facade is the main entry to the second story hall. Wide granite steps, between brick side walls capped by granite, lead up to double doors of vertical boarding decorated with nailheads and large hinges. The doors are set in a compound semicircular arch surrounded by a three course band of projecting or alternately projecting and receding headers. In the tympanum of the arch is a multipane transom window. Directly above the entry is a window set in a recessed semicircular arch with a brick hood mould of a type found elsewhere on the building--two courses of brick, with an outer course of projecting headers, an inner course of alternately projecting and receding headers, and rough stone label stops.. The double single pane casement windows have an eight pane window in the tympanum above them and a granite sill below them. In front of the window is a five sided wooden balcony with a moulded corbeled base, colonette style balusters, and a moulded rail. On the first story of the tower's west facade are a pair of arched windows of the same design as the balconied window, but sharing joined hoodmoulds and a continuous stone sill. A single arched window of the same design is found on the second story of the west facade. The lower levels of the south and east facades are blank as is a section of the tower above the second story. Three sawtooth courses top this blank section. On each facade above the decorative band is found a recessed panel containing a large semicircular compound arch. The lower half of each arch is filled with louvers largely hidden by four short stone columns which support a stone lintel with modillions which extends across the panel. Above the lintel is a large wooden clock face with Roman numerals and elaborate clock hands. The arch has a brick hoodmould of the same type as the windows below, but without the label stops. Two sawtooth courses top each recessed panel, and another three sawtooth courses are found above the panels, just below the moulded cornice. An ornate copper finial crowns the steep pyramidal roof.

On the first story of the south facade between the two towers are found five storefronts, each with large plate glass display windows with transom windows, and a paneled door, sometimes with a window. (Air conditioners are now set in the panels above the doors.) The westernmost storefront has a brick base beneath its windows, and a flush entry. The other four have wooden bases, and are arranged in pairs sharing a recessed entry. The central pair of storefronts is flanked by ornamental metal piers which support the moulded

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metal cornice above the storefronts. Above the cornice is a four course band of alternately projecting and receding headers. The second story has five large twelve over two sash windows set in semicircular arches with eight pane windows in the tympanums. All are topped by the same hoodmould used for the tower windows. The central window, set between two projecting vertical strips, has a compound arch. The pairs of windows flanking the central window have simpler recessed arches and joined hoodmoulds. The vertical strips are continued through the main block's cornice (which incorporates two sawtooth courses and a moulded metal gutter) to become piers flanking the brick faced, gable-roofed dormer directly above the central window. The dormer's two four over one sash windows are found in semicircular arches with louvred tympanums and joined single course brick hoodmoulds. The pair of windows are set in a recessed semicircular arch with the same hoodmould as is found below. A moulded stone cornice is found on the gable's rakes. And elaborate carved stone finials crown the peak of the gable and the two flanking piers.

The eastern tower projects slightly from the south facade of the main block, and more boldly from its eastern facade. The first stories of the south and east tower facades have brick corners, but they are mostly occupied by another storefront with large plate glass display windows and transom windows. In the center of the south facade is the entry, a paneled door with a window, beneath a transom window. The south windows have a wooden base, but the eastern ones have a brick base. The moulded metal cornice and band of alternating headers found on the south facade of the main block are continued entirely around the eastern tower. The southern, eastern and northern facades each have a recessed panel, topped by two sawtooth courses, filling their upper two stories. While the north panel is blank, the other two panels each have three two-story semicircular arches, which share joined hoodmoulds with stone label stops, of the type already described. Each arch has two windows—a second-story rectangular four over one sash window with flat brick head, and a third-story arched six over two sash window, set in the arch itself. (Two of the eastern facade's third-story windows have been replaced by louvers.) The tower has a cornice like that of the main block. And, its pyramidal roof is crowned by the same copper finial as is found on the western tower.

The west facade of the main block has two small basement windows with flat brick heads, and, to the north, a stone stairway leading down to a paneled basement door. Above the basement stairway, are the wooden steps and landing with railing for a paneled door with a transom window in the first story. South of this door are three window openings with flat brick heads. One is now bricked in, but the others contain six over two sash windows. The second story has two windows, a small round window to the north, and a window similar to those of the south facade—twelve over two sash in a semicircular arch beneath an eight pane tympanum window and the usual hoodmould with stone label stops. The western slope of the hip roof has a single shed roofed dormer with slate covered sides, plain trim, and two four over four sash windows.

At the western corner of the rear (north) facade is a one-story semicircular brick projection with a half conical slate roof. The projection has three small windows in the basement and three six over two sash windows at the main level, all with flat brick heads. Its simple brick cornice incorporates a moulded metal gutter. Directly above the projection are two small round windows and a small glass door with wooden frame which opens onto the steel fire escape found on the north facade. In the first story, to the east of the projection are four storefronts under a continuous metal lintel. The westernmost storefront

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which has a brick base under what was once its window, is separated from the others by a brick pier. Ornamented metal piers separate the three other storefronts. (All four storefronts are now filled in, with vertical boarding, modern windows and doors, replacing their original display windows and doors.) In the second story above the storefronts are five large windows with the same fenestration as their southern counterparts--twelve over two sash windows beneath eight pane tympanum windows in semicircular arches. But the northern windows do not have the hoodmoulds or the recessed and compound arches of the southern windows. On the north slope of the roof, above the central window, is another shed roofed dormer with slate covered sides and two four over four sash windows.

The east facade of the main block has a single basement window. Its first story, which is partially obscured by the wing's vestibule which overlaps the main block, has just two windows with flat brick heads--a narrow one over one sash window to the north and a large horizontal three pane window to the south. The second story has, to the south, a large arched window, like that of the west facade, with twelve over two sash, eight pane tympanum window, and brick hoodmould with stone label stops. To the north are two narrow four over one sash windows with flat brick heads, and one large rectangular louver, above the wing's vestibule.

The wing has a complex set of roofs--a main gable roof covering most of the wing, a cross gable roof of the same height on the east covering a shallow projection, and a corresponding but lower cross gable roof on the west covering a similar shallow projection. The main gable roof is broader to the north of the cross gable roofs, so that between the western gabled projection and the main block, there is room for a one bay wide, one-story, shed roofed, brick porch. And on the east, the eastern cross gable roof overlaps the main block to enlarge the wing's vestibule. Like both of the towers, the wing has a three course watertable. Its brick cornice, similar to the main block's cornice, has two sawtooth courses and returns on the gables. The moulded metal gutter incorporated into the lateral cornice also appears in the returns.

The wing's one bay wide south facade, facing Main Street, features a compound semicircular arch with the standard brick hoodmould with stone label stops. The arch contains a paneled door with a curved top, flanked by half sidelights, also curved to fit the arch. Above this entry is a projecting brick cornice with dentils. Between this cornice and the regular cornice at the eaves are found a series of projecting brick triangles, an unusual piece of ornamental brickwork.

The first story of the eastern gabled section has four windows. The southern pair of semicircular arched double two pane casement windows, both in recessed arches, share a continuous stone sill and joined hoodmoulds of the familiar type. The northern windows are both six over one sash windows with flat brick heads. Three semicircular arch windows, with six over two sash and six pane tympanums, are grouped in the second story beneath a joined hoodmould of the standard design (but without the label stops). Vertical sawtooth bands cross the gable at the lintel level of the second story windows and in an unbroken band above them. In the peak of the gable are two small one over one sash windows with flat brick heads. A wide and tall chimney breaks the north slope of the eastern gable roof. To the north of the eastern gable is a modern door, with concrete steps, which replaces an earlier window and allows easier access from the classroom now in the wing to the neighboring elementary school. To the north of the door are found four eight over two sash windows with flat brick heads, set high in the wall.

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The north gable end facade has a group of four tall windows on the main level. Each window has three sections, a one over one sash window beneath two fixed sections, each with four panes. In the gable is a double casement window, of eight pane sash, which, like the windows below, has a flat brick head.

On the west facade, between the west gable and the main block, is the one-story brick porch. It has an open semicircular arch beneath a plain brick cornice with metal gutter. Wooden steps within the porch, which has brick walls and a beaded board ceiling, lead up to double arched doors of vertical boarding, set in a semicircular arch with granite sill. This entry, like the main south entry, opens into the wing's vestibule. Above the porch are two four over one sash windows with flat brick heads. The western gable has two windows in the basement, a group of four tall windows like those of the north facade in the first story, and a single small one over one sash window in the gable, all with flat brick heads. To the north of the gable are a single four over one sash window, and a group of four eight over two sash windows, set high in the wall, corresponding to the similar group of the eastern facade. Beneath these windows are two basement windows, also with flat brick heads.

The exterior has thus far seen few changes--some air conditioners on the south facade of the main block, some louvers in two east tower windows, a bricked up window in the west facade, the filled in storefronts of the north facade, and the new door in the wing's east facade. None of these minor changes threaten the architectural integrity of the building.

But the interiors have not been so well preserved. Much of the interior of the building has been remodeled to accommodate changed uses. The first story of the main block, once used largely for stores, was renovated in the early 1970's for town offices and the district court. These rooms now have modern paneling, doors, counters, partitions, and suspended ceilings. Little of the original detailing survives in the first story. The hall in the second story is reached by a steep stairway from a brick walled entry hall in the first story of the tower, to a small lobby, with a ticked office and paneled doors to the hall and the stairs to the balcony above the lobby. The stairway and the lobby still retain their vertical board wainscoating, plaster walls, and moulded trim. The large public hall, which occupies most of the second story, has a balcony at the west end and, once had a stage at the east end. The stage, however, is now a separate room, as the stage opening was filled in with a plastered wall. The hall retains its hardwood floor and plaster walls with baseboard and chair rail. But, the ceiling, although still high, has been lowered. The balcony, whose front rail is ornamented by engaged colonetts, is still lit by the western dormer, but the northern and southern dormers have been cut off by the new ceiling. At the southeast corner of the hall is the door to the second story of the east tower, which served as an anteroom to the stage. This room also retains its hardwood floor, plaster walls, and moulded trim. The third story of the east tower, reached by stairs with decorative newel posts, turned balusters and moulded rail, is, like the second story of the west tower, a storage room with unfinished brick walls. In the northeast corner of the hall is an exit to a plaster walled hallway and the brick walled stairway down to the vestibule at the south end of the rear wing.

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The brick walled vestibule is reached by the main entry on the south facade of the wing and from the open porch of the west facade. The original door from the vestibule to the library room that occupies most of the wing's first story, has been replaced by a modern door. The library room, now used as an elementary school classroom, is I-shaped in plan, being partially divided by two small rooms, on the west, a restroom, and, on the east, a former librarian's room, which has served as a vestibule, since its single window was replaced by a modern door to provide more direct access to the elementary school next door. Most of the bookcases have been removed, but the room still has its plaster walls and ceiling, moulded baseboards and trim, and, its most notable feature, a massive fireplace with brick hearth and surround, and paneled oak mantelpiece flanked by engaged colonetts, beneath a moulded, dentiled cornice. The upper level of the wing is an unfinished storage area.

The grounds of Brewster Memorial Hall are now mostly devoted to parking, with a large paved parking lot to the rear of the building, and a smaller parking lot on the Main Street front. There are curbed sidewalks between the parking lots and the main block. Between the front parking lot and the Main Street sidewalk, there is a narrow curbed area planted with shrubs. A narrow lawn is found on the west side, between the main block and Union Street. And, to the east of the building, a lawn with trees, shrubs, and paved walkways blends into the lawn of the adjoining elementary school.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below							
— prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion				
— 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science				
— 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture				
— 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/				
— 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian				
X 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater				
— 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 1888–1890

Builder/Architect

James T. Kelley, Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Brewster Memorial Hall is significant architecturally as an important public building in the Romanesque Revival style, whose exterior has been preserved virtually unchanged since its construction.

The plan and form of the building, if not its style, were dictated by the donor, John W. Brewster. Brewster, a native of Wolfeboro, made a fortune with his dry goods and banking firms in Boston. He died in 1886, leaving large bequests for the benefit of his native town. His will instructed the trustees of his estate to support the poor, the public schools, and the Wolfeborough and Tuftonborough Academy (in the last case, provided that it change its name to Brewster Academy). The trustees were also instructed to "erect in my said native town of Wolfeborough, in New Hampshire, a plain brick building, as nearly as possible on the plan of and like the public building or town hall erected by William P. Sargent in and for the town of Merrimac, in Massachusetts; said building shall be held by my trustees forever for the use and benefit of the inhabitants of said town of Wolfeborough as an for a town hall and public library. The stores in said building on the lower floor shall be rented by my trustees, and all the rent and income over and above the expenses and charges arising therefrom shall be by them used and appropriated for the necessary repair and care of said building, and for the care, support of, and purchase of books for the said public library to be in said building."<sup>1</sup>

Sargent Hall, which still stands in Merrimac, was erected in 1876, according to the plans of Boston architect Thomas W. Silloway. It is a two-story hip roofed building with a tall clock tower at the left hand corner of its street facade, and a shorter tower at the right hand corner of the same facade. The building was designed with stores as well as a selectmen's office and a public library on the first floor. (Today, town offices occupy all of the first floor.) In the base of the clock tower is the entrance to the public hall in the second story. (Such a combination of income producing stores and a public hall was not uncommon in the 19th century. Although more typical of the buildings erected by fraternal organizations, the plan of stores beneath a hall was used for a few New Hampshire town halls, as in Tilton and Milford.)

The trustees hired another Boston architect, James T. Kelley, to design the Wolfeboro building.<sup>2</sup> Although a rear wing was added to house a much larger public library than was found at Merrimac, the main block of Brewster Memorial Hall does correspond closely to the plan and form of the Massachusetts building. However, if Kelley was obliged to follow Silloway's plan, he was not content to simply copy another architect's building.

<sup>1</sup> From Item Seven of John Brewster's will. For a more complete quote, see Benjamin Franklin Parker, *HISTORY OF WOLFEBOROUGH* (Wolfeboro, 1901) pp. 441–2.

<sup>2</sup> Kelley was apparently also commissioned to design the new building of Brewster Academy, the south wing of which was completed in 1890. At least, the *Boston Evening Transcript* reported on November 1, 1890, that Kelley had submitted designs for the Brewster Academy building to a Boston architectural exhibit. Unfortunately, the brick building later burned.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet #7.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .78

Quadrangle name Wolfeboro, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A	1 19	3 2 1	1 5 15 10	4 18 2 7 9 12 15
	Zone	Easting	Northing	
C				
E				
G				

B				
	Zone	Easting	Northing	
D				
F				
H				

**Verbal boundary description and justification:** The nominated property is a rectangular lot at the northeast corner of South Main Street and Union Street, which is 128 feet wide and 264 feet deep. The nominated property includes Brewster Memorial Hall and its grounds (Wolfeboro Tax Map 6, Block 8, Lot 34).

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
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state	n/a	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	David L. Ruell			
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organization	Lakes Region Planning Commission	date	March 31, 1983	
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street & number	Main Street	telephone	279-8171	
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city or town	Meredith	state	New Hampshire	03253
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## 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

Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development  
title NH State Historic Preservation Officer

date JUL 23 '83

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date

9/8/83

J. Allores Byers  
keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The style of Sargent Hall can best be described as Victorian eclectic, for it blends such different elements as buttresses and pilasters, pointed Gothic windows and a heavy Classical cornice. Silloway designed a picturesque building with the deliberate variety of the mid-Victorian period. For example, he used different styles of roofs for the different sections of the building--a hip roof on the main block, a gable roof on the shorter tower, and a mansard roof with gabled dormers on the clock tower. This studied variety is one of the building's main attractions, but it was not to everyone's taste.

Kelley chose to make his design a more coherent one, using the forms and ornament of the Romanesque Revival. This style seems to have reached the height of its popularity for New Hampshire public buildings in the late 1880's and the 1890's, as it was used for a number of libraries, churches, schools and courthouses during that period. A few other town halls, such as those in Alton, Franklin and Hinsdale were also designed in the style.

Kelley used a few features repeatedly, such as sawtooth courses and semicircular compound or recessed arches, with hoodmoulds, to give the main public facades, at least, a consistent ornamental scheme. He gave his square towers pyramidal roofs, which complement the hip roof of the main block. The clock tower received more height and emphasis in the Wolfeboro building. And, the clock faces were given dignified frames--compound arches with stone colonades in recessed panels--much more impressive than the gabled wooden dormers that house the clock faces of the Merrimac tower. While Silloway had placed an ornate central ventilator on the roof of the main block, Kelley used in its stead, a gabled wall dormer, whose position, materials, and ornament make it part of the south facade, not a distinctive and separate feature. The result of all these changes was a building of similar form, but of quite a different character from its prototype -a design with less variety and picturesqueness, but greater coherence and dignity.

The trustees purchased the lot in September of 1887. The loss of the local newspaper's files has left us with only a few brief items from other area newspapers to sketchily document the building's progress. The Sandwich Reporter noted in May of 1888, that "Work on the foundation of the new town hall has commenced."<sup>3</sup> The following spring, the Carroll County Pioneer reported that the building was "about to be laid in mortar".<sup>4</sup> By mid-January, the town hall was "nearly completed".<sup>5</sup> Several papers reported on the dedication of Brewster Memorial Hall and the public library on February 21, 1890. At that time, the Carroll County Pioneer noted that the new building had cost "about \$50,000".<sup>6</sup>

Since 1890, the interior of the building has been considerably altered, largely to accommodate new uses. The upstairs auditorium has received a new ceiling and the stage has been partitioned off. In 1971, the stores in the first story were remodeled to serve as town offices. In 1979, a new building was erected for the public library. So, the library wing is now used as an elementary school classroom. However, many interesting interior details, such as the library fireplace and the auditorium's balcony still survive intact.

<sup>3</sup> Sandwich Reporter, May 24, 1888.

<sup>4</sup> Carroll County Pioneer (Sanborncville), May 3, 1889.

<sup>5</sup> Sandwich Reporter, January 16, 1890.

<sup>6</sup> Carroll County Pioneer, February 28, 1890.

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By contrast, the exterior of the building is almost perfectly preserved. A single new door in the library wing, a bricked up window in the west facade, the boarded up storefronts of the rear facade, a few air conditioners and louvers, are the only noticeable changes. These relatively unimportant alterations have had little effect on the building's external appearance. Brewster Memorial Hall therefore remains one of the most important late 19th century municipal buildings in the Lakes Region and the state. It is, without doubt, the best Romanesque Revival town hall in New Hampshire. And it must be ranked as one of the most important buildings in that style still standing in the state.

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Brewster Memorial Hall  
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50 0 25 50 100 feet

