

# Maghull Town Council Character Assessment



May 2017



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## **Local Character Assessment**

This document is intended as an adjunct to the Maghull Neighbourhood Plan (2017). It supports the Neighbourhood Plan Policies in their intent to encourage future planners and developers to build on the town's strengths, while avoiding repetition of past planning mistakes. It identifies:

- The history, topography and geology of the town and its natural environs;
- The design strengths and weaknesses of the built and green environments in the town (as identified by the 2013 Town Council Residents' Survey, Neighbourhood Plan Survey 2015 and Public Consultation);
- The visual character of the town's different neighbourhoods;
- The linkages between these neighbourhoods.

Appendix 1 gives a detailed summary of the distinctive features of the town's different areas.

Appendix 2 is a map showing the main discrete character areas and their linkages.



## **History, Topography and Geology**

The original settlement, consisting of fifty people and six square miles of agricultural settlement, was established prior to the Domesday Survey of 1086 where the town is recorded as Magele on a ridge of high ground, that can be most clearly seen at Red Lion Bridge towards the centre of the town and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal follows it on the plain and the A5147 on the brow. A church is known to have existed in the area in 1100 although it has been rebuilt at least once and the chapel still stands, in the churchyard of the Victorian St Andrew's and is the oldest ecclesiastical building in Merseyside still in regular use for worship.

It is noted that in 1568 Maghull Moss was divided between Sir Richard Molyneux of Melling and Edward Hulme of Maghull. The boundary of Maghull was, in the north, Maghull Brook and to the south, Melling Brook; the west was marked by the River Alt. By 1780 a new manor house had been built near the site of the original and it still stands in the grounds of Maghull Homes with part of the original moat. It is also recorded that by 1667 the population of Maghull had increased to 599 with 136 houses and 127 families and by 1770 initial work had begun on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal with the first sod being cut by the Honourable Charles Lewis Morduant. In 1774, the canal had reached Maghull and provided it with its second connection to Liverpool. The arrival of the canal created new industry in the area, notably quarrying of sandstone and clay extraction. It also bolstered the local hostelry trade.

By the 1820s, horse racing was well established on land in Maghull. Old Racecourse Farm later became the site for the Meadows Hotel; and Old Racecourse Road, off Sefton Lane, commemorates the sport. Baines' Directory of Lancashire in 1825 provided the first list of specialist male occupations in Maghull – 1 blacksmith, 1 cooper, 1 tailor, 1 land surveyor and 1 wheelwright. By 1840 the agriculture of the area had changed from animal to arable farming and the 1861 National Census the population stood at 1,222. Due to this increase in population the railway came to Maghull in 1849, with a station on the Liverpool, Ormskirk and Preston Railway as well as the construction of the town's first police station which was set up by Lancashire County Council in 1870 and the town got a second station in 1884, Sefton and Maghull, on the newly built Cheshire Lines Committee Southport & Cheshire Lines Extension Railway to Southport, the line was an extension of the North Liverpool Extension Line. A large section of embankment has been destroyed to make space for Switch Island. In 1933 Northway (A59 road) was built, initially as a tree-lined single carriageway but dualled in the early 1960s, which bisects Maghull, taking travellers from Liverpool to Ormskirk off 'Liverpool Road'. The arrival of Northway triggered an increased rate of expansion in Maghull.



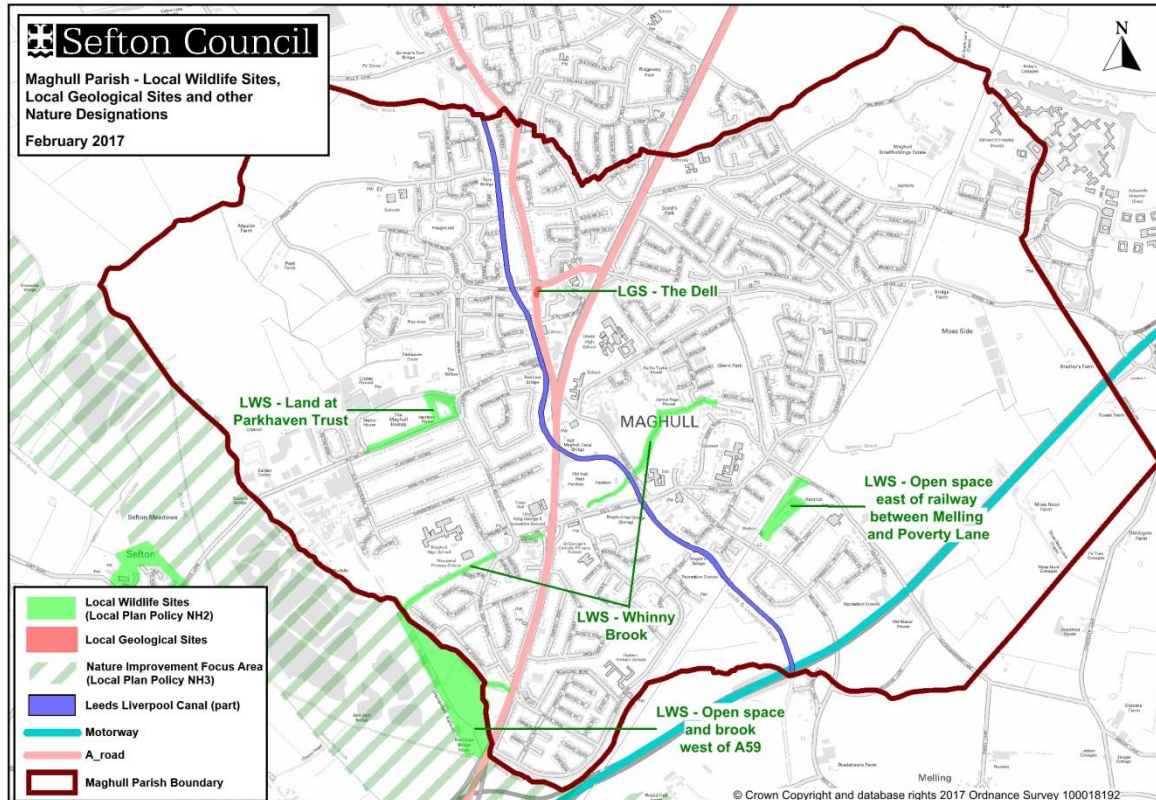


The area that Maghull occupies is flat and low lying leading to instances of flooding from the rivers and watercourses which flow through the town. The main river is the River Alt which flows east to west through Maghull before meeting the Irish Sea at Formby. Dover's Brook, Whinney Brook and Maghull Brook all flow into the Alt west of Maghull. The waterways have previously flooded and the area is surrounded by flood plain particularly land east of Maghull.

Agricultural industry surrounds the town with arable farming being prevalent. The main crops are potatoes, rape seed and root vegetables. The farmland is classed as being in the top 2% of arable land. The aspect is open towards the M58 motorway and north towards Ormskirk whilst parts of the Mersey Forest can be seen from the west. To the south the aspect is more industrial with Switch Island and Dunningbridge Road which leads to the Port of Liverpool both being major transport hubs.

The town itself is very green with 15 public parks and 18 public open spaces of which the majority are owned by the Town Council and maintained for the residents by them.

Local wildlife sites have been identified via the Local Plan and are detailed below. The area has only one Local Geological Site within it namely the Dell which is situated in the Town Centre.



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## **Conservation Area and Listed Buildings**

Maghull has one conservation area, the Damfield Lane Conservation Area. The conservation area focuses on a loose cluster of buildings around the junction of Damfield Lane and Deyes Lane, enclosed by the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and includes six listed buildings. The area encompasses a significant number of surviving elements of Maghull's early character. This includes the attractive and informal arrangement of buildings which relate to the area's medieval, agricultural past. Also of significance are landscape features such as the tree groupings, boundary walls and canal setting. With its early medieval roots, there may be considerable archaeological interest in the area.

The Canal forms an important part of the conservation area, as does the open land sweeping down to the canal from the Church. These areas contribute to the rural character of the area and the setting of the buildings centred on the Church, including the listed St Andrews Church, Ancient Chapel and the Maghull listed rectory.

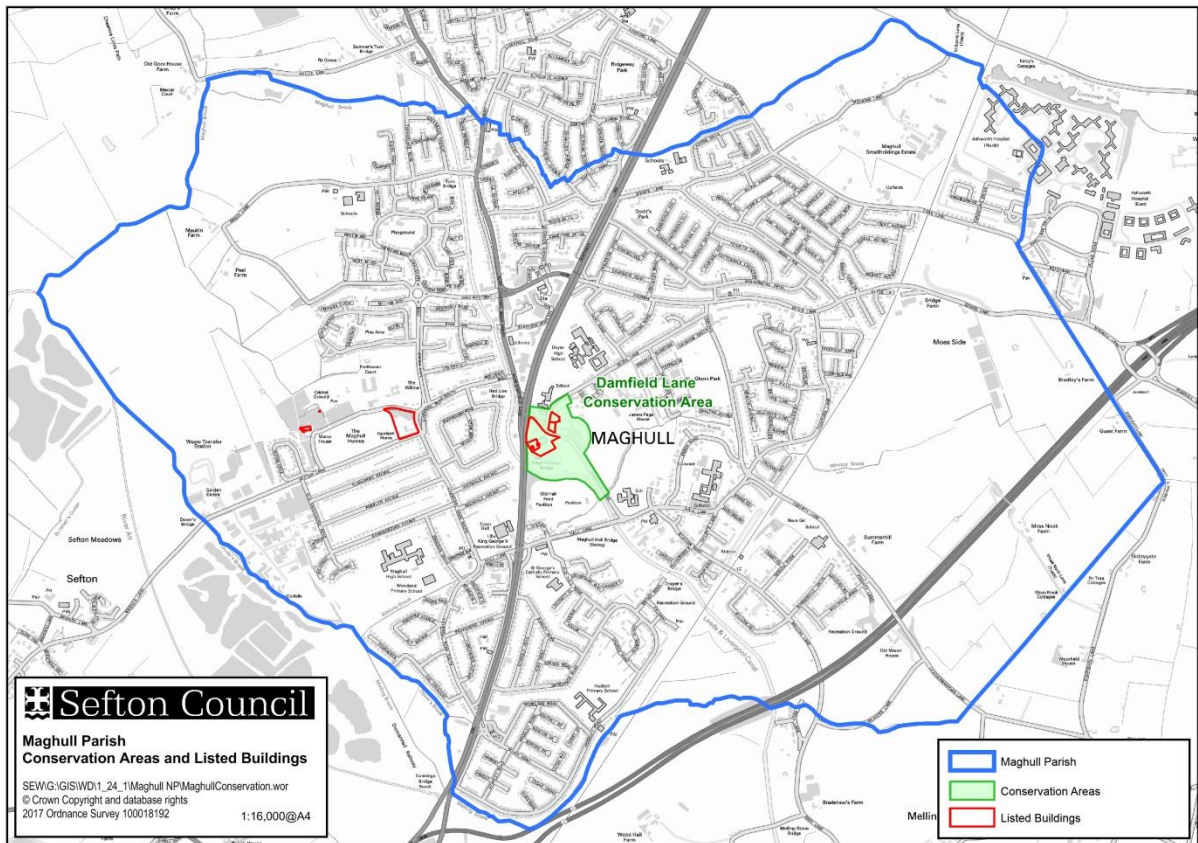
The area includes a substantial number of mature and semi-mature trees including an important and visually impressive group of limes fronting Damfield Lane. As a consequence, views into and across the designated area retain the impression of the isolated rural settlement that Maghull would have had up until it was engulfed by later Victorian and 20th Century development.

The listed buildings within the area include:

- Chapel House Farm 10 The Meadows
- St Andrews Church
- The Ancient Chapel
- Outbuilding to south of Chapel House Farm

The sundial to the south of the Ancient Chapel and the Harrison Monument, both within the old graveyard of St Andrew's Church, are also listed.





## **Conservation area within Maghull Parish Area with Listed Buildings and Monuments**

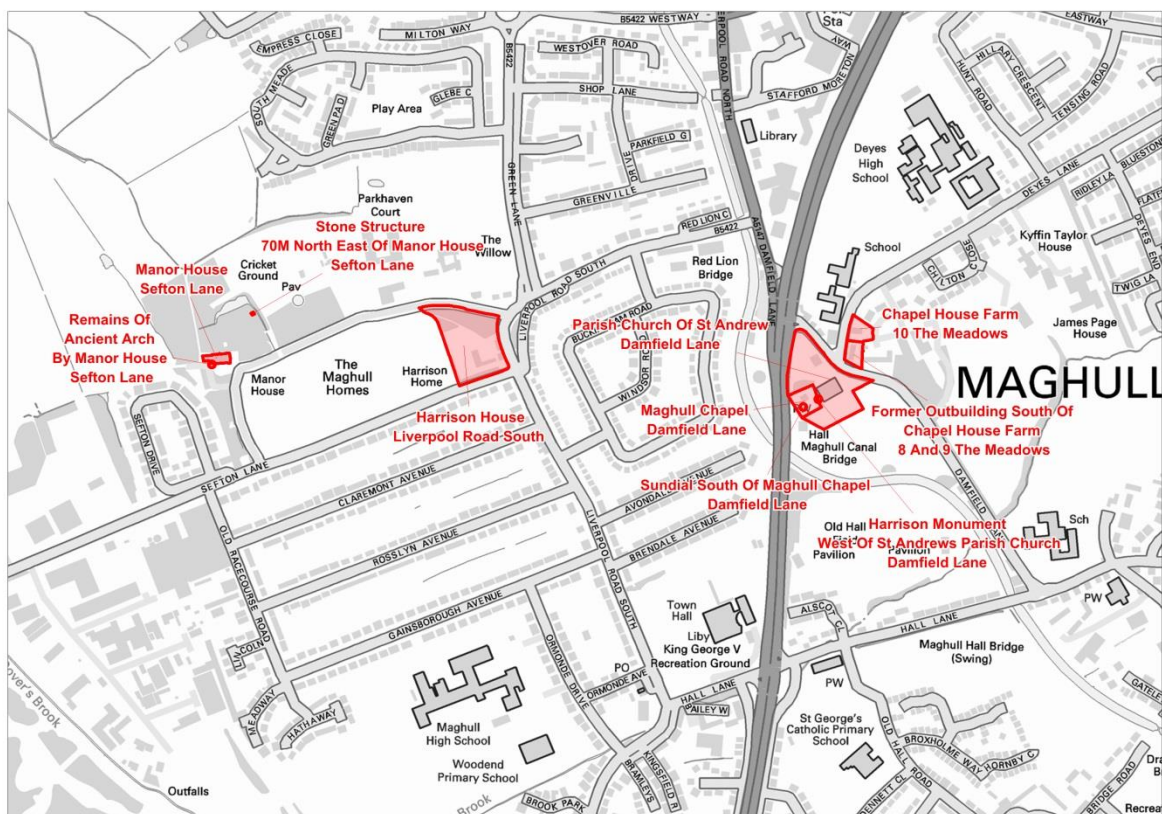
The other listed buildings within Maghull are to be found to the west of the town around the site of Parkhaven Trust. The buildings and monuments include:

- Harrison House
- Manor House Sefton Lane
- Remains of Ancient Arch Sefton Lane
- Stone structure east of Manor House, Sefton Lane
- Maghull Manor moated site (scheduled site)



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**Map of listed buildings in Maghull**



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## **Distinct Areas**

Maghull has several distinct neighbourhood areas which reflect the development of the town from its original settlement, through the Victorian age and then from the post war boom to the 1980's.

### **The Round Meade Character Area**

This estate was built in the 1970's with a good mix of houses. They are mostly either chalet houses or dormer bungalows made of sandstone coloured brick and tiled roofs. The estate is laid out in an open aspect design in a circular pattern with all roads leading off the central Round Meade road. The houses tend to front the open public space giving increased passive security. The estate is placed to the north west of the town between Green Lane and the Canal. There is light traffic through the Character Area as it is self-contained with limited access to the rest of the town. The enclosure treatments tend to be soft relying more on hedges and shrubs than fences and ornamental walls. There is significant tree planting of deciduous, native varieties giving considerable public amenity.



### **Lakes Character Area**

The Lakes Character Area was built in the 1960's and 70's and are small brick built semi-detached houses with tiled roofs. The houses have a greater density than the Round Meade Neighbourhood Area. However, five of the Town Council's parks are here ensuring the green feel of the town is continued. The front gardens are small reflecting the overall smaller plots for the houses in the area. They also have more



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brick built enclosures such as small ornamental walls and tall fences which reduces the open feel of the area. Fewer trees have been planted within front gardens and public areas. The area also incorporates Deyes Lane Neighbourhood Parade which provides some convenience shopping for residents.



## **Parkhaven Character Area**

The Parkhaven Trust site is a major protected open space which is used by the residents of Maghull on a daily basis. Parkhaven Trust allows free access to residents on their site and the open area is managed by themselves rather than the Town Council. The site provides the only allotment provision in the area and backs onto the Cheshire Lines public footpath. Several of the town's listed buildings are situated in its grounds. There is also a cricket pitch and pavilion which is used by the town's Cricket Club for their two third teams.



[Rosslyn Avenue](#)



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The houses which surround the site are traditional 1930's Edwardian villas with tree lined roads as well as considerable tree planting in the gardens. The roads are narrow and do not allow parking on both sides.

The houses are red brick or rendered/pebble dashed with slate roofs. Generally speaking the front gardens are small but there is considerable rear garden space. The boundary treatments tend to be brick with decorative coping stones. The housing density of the area is reasonably generous with wide plots. Some of the houses are of an individual style whilst still being in keeping with the general area. This area is to the west of the town and is next to Sefton Lane Industrial Estate with Dover's Brook being the border between Maghull and Sefton Parish Council area.

To the west of the area is Sefton Lane Industrial Estate which provides the only employment area within the town. This is a small complex of approximately 40 warehouse type units which are single story with tiles roofs. The uses are mainly B8 with a small amount of retail uses.

### **Dover's Brook Character Area**

This area is to the south west of the town and is mostly made up of 1950's semi-detached houses with some bungalows together with some later builds. The density is quite high with the main building materials being red brick then render with tiled roofs. Some of the roads are not tree lined and the only area of public open space is Bobby's Wood on the corner of Liverpool Road South and Northway. The roads are narrow although to the west of the area the house plots become more substantial. The prevalent boundary treatments are low ornamental walls with some shrubs. The aspect to the rear of the housing on Fouracres and the Crescent is open overlooking arable fields towards the coast and the Mersey Forest.

### **Moorhey Character Area**

The Moorhey Neighbourhood Area is to the south of the town and is mostly made up of post war social housing mostly now in private ownership. The building materials used for the semi-detached houses are mostly rendered brick with tiled roofs. The plots to the houses are small to the front with few garages. The boundary treatments are mostly low ornamental walls with some hedging. The area has two public parks both in the ownership of the Town Council but they are smaller in size to others within the town. There is a small neighbourhood area with some convenience shopping but it is not well utilised.



## **Hall Lane Character Area**

This is one of the oldest parts of Maghull with a mixture of established and imposing Victorian buildings. The building materials used are also a mixture which is dependent on the age of the building but include red and sandstone coloured bricks, stone, tiles and slate. The roads are narrow and tree lined with the boundary treatments being mostly high sandstone walls. The homes of Frank Hornby (Meccano, Hornby Model Railways) and Raphael Sabatini (novelist) are within this area.



[Rafael Sabatini's House © Sam](#)

[Phillips](#)

There are also new cul de sacs created from the possible demolition of a much larger property. These tend to be large dormer bungalows situated around a central hammer head road. There is a small neighbourhood centre with a good range of shops and convenience stores. Around Swan Walk and Kennessie Close there are assisted living bungalows and apartments. The area backs on to the Canal and there is an open aspect to the south, north and the east towards Melling.

The area has the Canal running through it and the local cricket and football pitches border the Canal as well. This gives an established and open feeling to area together with a green linkage to the west part of the town.



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## **Old Hall Park Character Area**

This area was the last in Maghull to be built and is situated on the former Maghull High School site. The houses are mostly detached with half red brick half render used on some of the houses together with tile roofs. The aspect to the front of the properties is open with small front gardens and all the houses have driveways.



[Old Hall Park Character Area](#)

The roads are distinctly curved to reduce speeding and are mainly cul-de-sacs with hammerhead tops. The boundary treatments include some high fences but generally there is a feeling of space. The area looks out onto Old Hall Park (owned and maintained by Sefton MBC) which is bordered by the Leeds Liverpool Canal.

## **Clent Farm Character Area**

Again this area is typified by 1950's -1960's semi-detached housing of brick and render together with tiled roofs. The front gardens tend to be small with limited off street parking available. The boundary treatments tend to be 1.5 metre high brick walls. The roads themselves are narrow and not usually tree lined although Clent Avenue has grassed verges. The area is bordered by Northway to the east and the Canal on the west. There is a small shopping parade on Liverpool Road North. The houses which back onto the Canal have long gardens and have taken advantage of the setting of the Canal.





[Leeds-Liverpool Canal](#)  
[Liverpool Road North](#)



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## **The Maghull List**

The following buildings have been identified as being of particular architectural worth and have a deep meaning to the residents of the town. They are part of what makes Maghull singular and reflect its individual character.

**High Pastures** is one of the original doctor's surgeries in Maghull and is a large Victorian building on Liverpool Road North.



[High Pastures Surgery © Sam Phillips](#)

**The Convent Maricourt School** was the home of Frank Hornby (Meccano, Hornby Model Railways) and is a large Victorian villa. Behind the building is a newer addition which reflects the building's current use as the Sixth Form Centre at Maricourt High School. This building is integral to the history of Maghull.



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Frank Hornby's House (Sixth Form Centre Maricourt High School) © Sam Phillips

**158-160 Liverpool Road South** is a pair of semidetached houses next to KGV Playing Fields. The houses are built from red sandstone and contribute to the uniqueness of the Parkhaven Neighbourhood Area. The sandstone boundary treatment is also unique.



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**The former Rectory at St Andrew's Church** is a good example of Victorian building. Although the house is no longer in use as a rectory for the Church it is in keeping with the other buildings in the Conservation Area. The Georgian style sash windows, although not of the same style as the Victorian building do not clash significantly and lend an older air to the building.



**Kensington House** is the former Conservative Club which has become a sports and leisure club. This is a large Victorian building with an imposing façade within the Hall Lane Character Area.



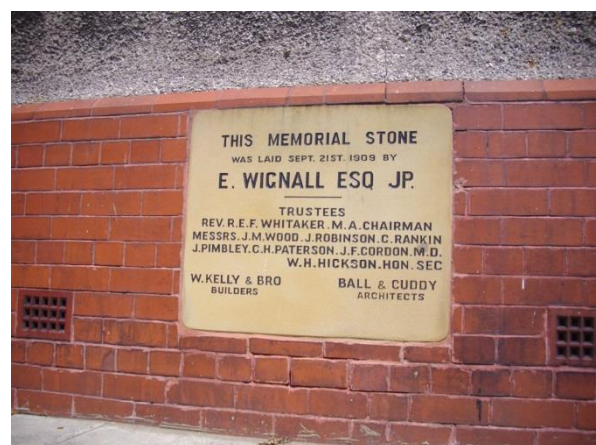
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**KGV Playing Fields Gates.** These gates were made by the patients in Ashworth Hospital for the celebrations of the centenary of the Town Council in 1994. The gate supports reflect the history of the park as it was named in honour of King George V's silver jubilee. KGV is the civic centre of the town.



**St Andrew's Parish Hall** is a large building close to the church and within the Damfield Lane Conservation Area. The building is imposing and commands a corner plot on the corner of Damfield Lane and Deyes Lane. It is in keeping with the listed buildings which surround it. The Parish Hall is well used by local groups as a meeting space as well as for rehearsals for local shows. The memorial stone is a particularly fine example.



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