



# Planning Statement

Construction of two padel tennis courts covered by steel frame structures with associated works to provide new access paths, fencing and landscaping.

Submitted on behalf of Raeburn Place Foundation

June 2026



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Raeburn Place Foundation in support of an application for Planning Permission for the construction of two covered padel tennis courts with associated access works, landscaping and ancillary development on land to the west of Portgower Place, Edinburgh.

## 1.2. The Raeburn Foundation

The Raeburn Place Foundation is a charity founded to ensure that people, irrespective of background or ability, have the everyday opportunity to come together, play, watch, appreciate and celebrate sport. The Foundation has a central mission to support the provision of and access to sport, sports programmes and healthy recreation for all.

The Foundation have accomplished the first part of its mission - creating a sustainable income stream that will protect the historic Raeburn Place ground and provide funding for sporting activities. The next stages seek to ensure that the grounds are fully utilised, with sport and organised activities flourishing. The construction of the Padel courts fits within this vision and will allow Padel Tennis to be open to all.

## 1.3. The Application Site

The application site is located on land to the west of Portgower Place within the wider Edinburgh Academicals / Raeburn Place sports grounds in Stockbridge, Edinburgh.

The site sits within an established recreational and sporting environment characterised by a mixture of sports pitches, ancillary sports buildings and associated infrastructure. The surrounding area also contains significant residential and commercial development associated with the Stockbridge town centre.

The site lies within the Inverleith Conservation Area and is situated an established area of open space. The wider area is characterised by a combination of historic urban form, mature landscaping and long-established sporting uses.

The submitted design information demonstrates that the proposed padel courts are carefully positioned within the wider sports complex and integrated with the surrounding built and landscaped environment.

## 1.4. The Proposed Development

Planning permission is sought for the construction of two padel tennis courts covered by steel frame structures together with associated access improvements, fencing, landscaping and ancillary works.

The proposed development is located on an area of land extending to approximately 1,249 square metres which is currently utilised for temporary storage purposes. The site forms part of the established sporting campus and is surrounded by existing recreational and sporting facilities.

The proposal has been designed to provide high-quality, year-round sporting facilities whilst maintaining the established recreational function of the wider site. The courts are positioned to integrate with the existing sports grounds and are supported by associated landscaping and access improvements which will enhance connectivity and assist in integrating the development into its surroundings.

The development represents a modest enhancement to the existing sporting infrastructure at Raeburn Place and forms part of the ongoing investment in sporting and community facilities across the wider grounds. The introduction of padel tennis courts will broaden the range of recreational opportunities available on the site, supporting both organised sporting activity and wider community participation. The foundation aim to engage with local primary schools and Broughton High school around the provision of the courts on a weekly basis on a no cost basis to promote sport and in particular padel amongst the pupils.

The proposed facilities will increase access to modern sporting infrastructure within an accessible urban location and contribute positively to the continued use and improvement of the Raeburn Place sports grounds as an established destination for sport and recreation.

## 1.5. Site Context and Evolution

The wider sporting grounds in this part of Stockbridge have a long-established recreational use and have been subject to ongoing investment and redevelopment over time.

The wider Raeburn Place sports grounds have evolved over time through a series of improvements and investment in sporting facilities, reflecting their long-established recreational use and importance within Stockbridge.

Most notably, planning permission was granted in 2013 for the redevelopment of part of the Edinburgh Academical Sports Ground, including new sporting, clubhouse and associated facilities. That investment helped modernise the site and secure its ongoing role as an important sporting and community asset. The approved development recognised that the continued use of the grounds for sport would inevitably require facilities to adapt and improve over time in response to changing needs and participation trends. Phase two of the redevelopment of spectator and sporting facilities within the wider grounds, will involve a continuing pattern of investment and improvement that has sought to secure the long-term future of sport at Raeburn Place.

The current proposal should be viewed in this context. It represents a relatively small-scale addition to the existing sporting infrastructure and forms part of the continuing enhancement of facilities available within the wider sports grounds. The provision of padel tennis courts will broaden the recreational opportunities available on the site whilst remaining entirely consistent with its established sporting function.

## 2. Planning Policy Assessment

### 2.1. The Statutory Test

Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The statutory Development Plan comprises:

- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)
- City Plan 2030

### 2.2. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) forms part of the statutory Development Plan and sets out Scotland's national spatial strategy and planning policies. The framework seeks to support sustainable development, improve health and wellbeing, create successful places and encourage investment in community infrastructure. In the context of the current proposal, particular relevance is afforded to policies which support the provision of high-quality sport and recreation facilities, recognising the important role that accessible opportunities for physical activity play in promoting healthier, more active and inclusive communities.

The most relevant NPF4 policies include:

- Policy 21 – Play, Recreation and Sport
- Policy 14 – Design, Quality and Place

Policy 21 of NPF4 supports development proposals which enhance, expand or provide new opportunities for sport and recreation facilities where they are appropriately located and designed.

The proposal directly supports these objectives through the delivery of modern publicly accessible recreational infrastructure within an established sporting location.

The development also supports wider health and wellbeing objectives by increasing access to year-round sporting activity within an accessible urban area.

The proposed development is consistent with the objectives of Policy 14 and the six qualities of successful places. The provision of new padel tennis facilities will support opportunities for physical activity and recreation, contributing positively to health and wellbeing and therefore reflecting the policy's aspiration for healthy places. The development has been carefully integrated within the existing sporting campus through its siting, scale and associated landscaping, ensuring that it contributes positively to the quality and character of the surrounding environment and maintains a pleasant recreational setting.

The site benefits from excellent accessibility within the urban area and is well connected to surrounding residential neighbourhoods, public transport routes and active travel networks, allowing users to access the facility without reliance on the private car. The proposal also represents the efficient use of land within an established sporting destination, supporting the continued investment and improvement of existing recreational infrastructure rather than requiring new facilities to be developed elsewhere. Furthermore, the introduction of padel tennis courts broadens the range of sporting opportunities available at Raeburn Place, helping to ensure that the wider sports grounds remain adaptable to changing patterns of participation and recreation over time.

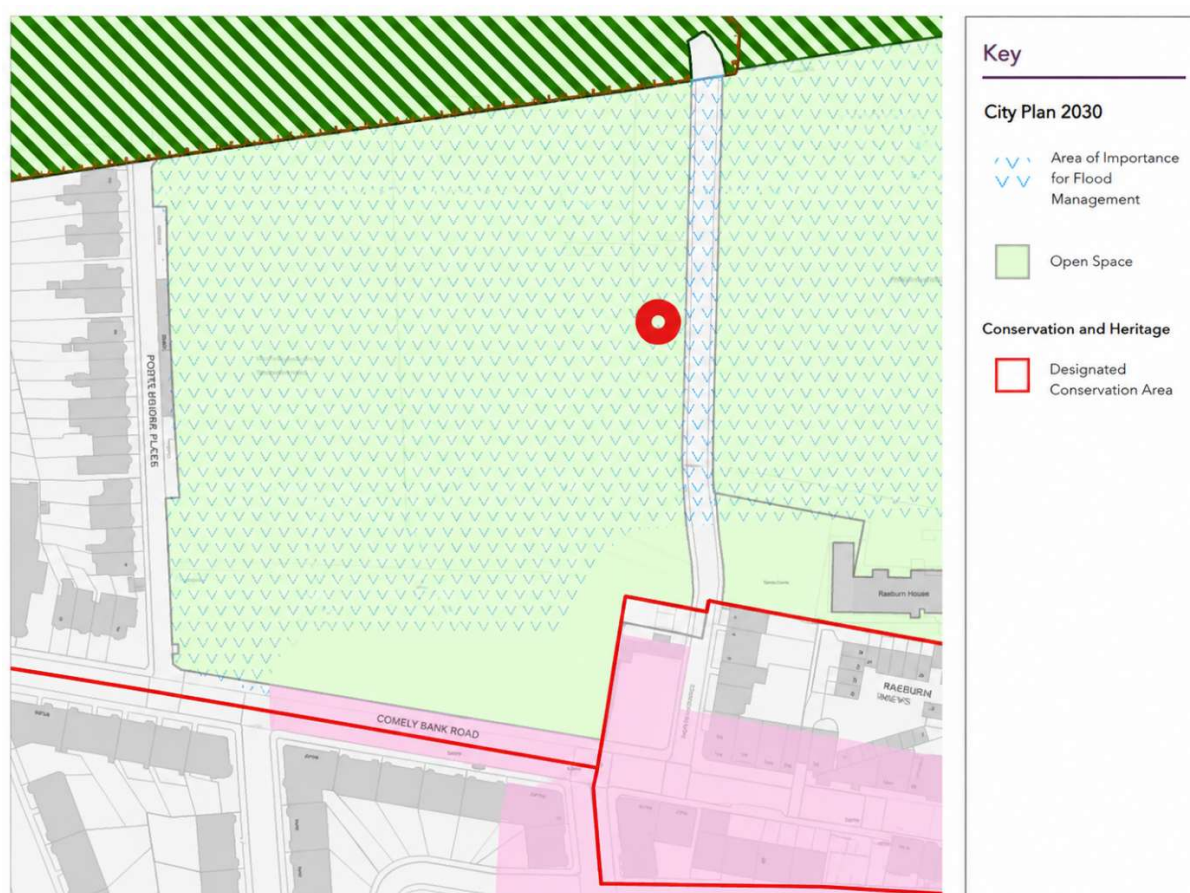
Taken together, the proposal represents a well-designed and appropriately scaled enhancement to an established sporting facility which responds positively to its context and accords with the principles and objectives of Policy 14.

## 2.3. City Plan 2030

City Plan 2030 provides the local planning policy framework for the City of Edinburgh and seeks to balance growth and investment with the protection and enhancement of the city's valued places, communities and environmental assets. The Plan recognises the important contribution that sport, recreation and open space make to health, wellbeing and quality of life. Accordingly, the principal policies relevant to the assessment of the proposal relate to design quality, open space protection, outdoor sports facilities and the conservation area designation.

The Proposed Development sits within the Raeburn Place and Edinburgh Academicals grounds and is identified in City Plan 2030 as Open Space (Policies Env 23, Env 24) and within the Inverleith Conservation Area (Policy Env 14). The land is also noted as being within an Area of Importance for Flood Management (Policy Env 35)

**Figure 1:** Extract from The City Plan 2030 Proposals Map



most relevant Local Development Plan policies include:

- Env 23 - Open Space Protection
- Env 24 - Protection of Outdoor Sports Facilities
- Env 14 - Conservation Areas - Development
- Env 35 - Reducing Flood Risk
- Env 1 - Design Quality and Context
- Env 2 - Co-ordinated Development
- Env 3 - Development Design – Incorporating and Enhancing Existing and Potential Features
- Env 4 - Development Design – Impact on Setting
- Env 6 - Green Blue Infrastructure

- Env 7 - Sustainable Developments

The proposal is consistent with the recreational and sporting character of the wider site and represents an appropriate enhancement of existing sports provision.

## 2.4. Sport, Recreation and Open Space

City Plan 2030 recognises the important contribution that open spaces, sports facilities and recreational infrastructure make to the health, wellbeing and quality of life of Edinburgh's communities. The Plan seeks not only to protect existing recreational assets but also to support investment in facilities that increase participation in sport and physical activity, improve the quality of existing provision and ensure that sporting infrastructure continues to meet changing needs and demands.

The application site forms part of the long-established Raeburn Place sports grounds which continue to perform an important recreational and community function within the city. The proposed development represents a further investment in this established sporting destination through the provision of modern padel tennis facilities. The proposal will broaden the range of recreational opportunities available on the site, encourage increased participation in sport and support the continued evolution of the wider sporting campus whilst retaining its established recreational function.

### **Policy Env 23 – Open Space Protection**

Policy Env 23 seeks to protect open spaces that contribute to the amenity, recreational value, landscape character and environmental quality of the city. Whilst the application site is identified as open space within City Plan 2030, the proposal must be considered in the context of its location within an established sports ground and its continued recreational use.

The proposed development occupies a relatively small area of land currently used for temporary storage purposes and does not result in the loss of publicly accessible parkland, informal recreational space or any strategic component of the wider green network. The proposal will not adversely affect the character or function of the surrounding open space and will not diminish accessibility to local or large standard open spaces within the area.

The development will not prejudice the continuity, visual amenity or wider function of the green network and is not expected to adversely affect biodiversity or flood management objectives. Furthermore, the proposal delivers a clear community benefit through the provision of new sporting facilities which will increase opportunities for participation in physical activity and recreation. The enhancement of sporting provision at Raeburn Place represents a local benefit that is proportionate to the scale of development and supports the wider recreational objectives of the site.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with the objectives of Policy Env 23.

### **Policy Env 24 – Protection of Outdoor Sports Facilities**

Policy Env 24 seeks to protect outdoor sports facilities whilst recognising that investment and change may be required to maintain and improve sporting provision over time.

The proposal does not result in the loss of an existing sports facility. Rather, it introduces additional sporting infrastructure within the established Raeburn Place sports grounds and enhances the overall sporting offer available on the site. The development broadens the range of sports that can be accommodated, increases opportunities for participation and contributes towards the continued improvement of recreational facilities at Raeburn Place.

The proposal is ancillary to the principal sporting function of the wider site and occupies only a small proportion of the overall sports grounds. It does not adversely affect the use, operation or future potential of the remaining sporting facilities and instead complements the established recreational use of the site.

The proposal therefore aligns with the objectives of Policy Env 24 by supporting the continued enhancement, diversification and long-term sustainability of sporting provision within the city.

## 2.5. Conservation

### Policy Env 14 – Conservation Areas

The application site lies within the Inverleith Conservation Area and therefore consideration must be given to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the designated area.

The Raeburn Place sports grounds form a long-established and distinctive component of the Conservation Area, contributing to its character through a combination of open sporting spaces, recreational infrastructure and associated buildings. The sporting function of the site is an established element of the area's character and significance.

The proposed development has been carefully positioned within the wider sports grounds on an area currently utilised for storage and ancillary purposes. Importantly, the proposal does not result in the loss of existing playing fields, active sports pitches or areas of meaningful open recreational space. The open character of the principal sporting areas will therefore be retained.

The siting of the proposed courts adjacent to the edge of the sports campus allows the development to integrate with the existing pattern of built sports infrastructure whilst avoiding encroachment into the central playing areas. The proposal also relates closely to the location of the consented second phase of the stand development, reinforcing an established cluster of sporting facilities rather than introducing built form into currently open sporting areas.

The proposal represents a modest addition to an established sporting complex and continues the long-standing evolution of facilities at Raeburn Place. The development respects the established spatial character of the grounds, retains the predominance of open sporting space and preserves the character and appearance of this part of the Inverleith Conservation Area.

### Edinburgh Design Guidance – Key Views

The proposal has also been considered against the Edinburgh Design Guidance, which is a material consideration in the assessment of development proposals within the city. The Guidance seeks to protect Edinburgh's important skyline, landmark features and key views through the assessment of building height, massing and their relationship with protected skyspace.

The application site is visible from parts of Inverleith Park, including locations associated with Key View N2b identified within the Edinburgh Skyline Study. This view is valued for the relationship between the open landscape of Inverleith Park and the wider city skyline, including a number of landmark buildings and features. The Edinburgh Design Guidance recognises the importance of maintaining the skyspace surrounding such landmarks in order to preserve their setting and prominence within key views.

The submitted visualisations demonstrate that the proposed padel courts will sit within the established urban edge of the Raeburn Place sports grounds and below the height of the consented Phase 2 stand development. The structures do not project into the skyline or interrupt the protected skyspace associated with the landmark features identified within View N2b. Instead, they are perceived as part of the existing built form associated with the sports grounds and remain visually subordinate to the wider city backdrop.

Importantly, the proposal occupies a peripheral area of the sports campus currently used for storage and ancillary purposes and does not encroach upon the principal open sporting areas which form the foreground of the view. The key characteristics of View N2b, including the visual relationship between Inverleith Park, the city skyline and the recognised landmark features beyond, will therefore remain unaffected.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the objectives of the Edinburgh Design Guidance. It does not adversely affect the protected skyline, diminish important skyspace, or detract from the appreciation of Key View N2b and its associated landmark features.

## 2.6. Flood Risk

### **Policy Env 35 – Reducing Flood Risk**

The application site lies within an area identified in City Plan 2030 as an Area of Importance for Flood Management. The proposal has therefore been developed with careful regard to flood risk considerations and the requirements of Policy Env 35.

The proposed development occupies a relatively small area within the wider Raeburn Place sports grounds and is located on land currently used for ancillary storage purposes. The proposal does not involve development within an active watercourse, the culverting of any watercourse, or works which would interfere with existing flood management infrastructure. The proposal is effectively an open outside environment structure with a lightweight roof and sides to prevent rain and wind detrimentally affecting the play of Padel.

A detailed assessment of flood risk, drainage and surface water management is being undertaken by Harley Haddow and will accompany the planning application. This assessment will consider the potential effects of the development on surface water runoff, flood storage and wider flood management objectives, having regard to current climate change allowances and the requirements of City Plan 2030, NPF4 and relevant technical guidance.

The development has been designed to ensure that flood risk considerations are incorporated from the outset and it is anticipated that appropriate drainage and surface water management measures can be accommodated within the site. Subject to the findings of the technical assessment, the proposal is expected to avoid increasing flood risk on the site itself or elsewhere, maintain the flood management function of the wider area and ensure compliance with the objectives of Policy Env 35.

The proposal will also be supported by an appropriate drainage strategy which will demonstrate how surface water arising from the development will be managed in accordance with relevant standards and best practice.

## 2.7. Design Policies

### **Env 1 – Design Quality and Context**

The proposal has been designed as a functional sports facility within an established recreational complex. Its scale, form and appearance reflect its sporting purpose while respecting the character of the wider site and surrounding conservation area. The development maintains the established sporting use of the grounds and integrates with the existing landscape setting.

### **Env 2 – Co-ordinated Development**

The proposal forms part of the wider sporting campus at Raeburn Place and does not prejudice the future operation, management or development of adjoining land. It represents a complementary enhancement to existing sports facilities and is consistent with the coordinated use of the wider site.

### **Env 3 – Development Design – Incorporating and Enhancing Existing and Potential Features**

The design has sought to retain and respond to the site's positive characteristics, including the established landscape framework and sporting character of the grounds. Existing boundary planting is largely retained and supplemented by additional landscaping measures where appropriate.

#### **Env 4 – Development Design – Impact on Setting**

The proposed structure is positioned within an existing sports complex and has been designed to minimise visual impact through its siting, height and form. The development preserves the character and appearance of the conservation area and maintains the wider setting of surrounding heritage assets.

#### **Env 6 – Green Blue Infrastructure**

Policy Env 6 seeks to protect, enhance and strengthen Edinburgh's green and blue infrastructure network, recognising its contribution to landscape character, biodiversity, recreation, climate resilience and environmental quality.

The proposed development is located within an existing area of ancillary storage within the wider Raeburn Place sports grounds and does not result in the loss of established playing fields, recreational green space or significant landscape features. The proposal has been carefully sited on land which currently makes a limited contribution to the wider green infrastructure network and therefore avoids encroachment into the principal areas of open sporting space which define the character of the grounds.

The development retains the wider open character of the sports campus and preserves the continuity of the surrounding green spaces. Existing landscape features are largely retained and the proposal incorporates additional planting and landscape enhancements which will contribute positively to the site's setting.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to maintain the integrity and function of the wider green infrastructure network whilst supporting the continued recreational use and enhancement of the Raeburn Place sports grounds.

#### **Env 7 – Sustainable Development**

Policy Env 7 seeks to ensure that development contributes positively to climate resilience and sustainable development objectives, including consideration of whole-life carbon impacts, resource efficiency and the long-term adaptability of buildings and structures.

The proposal promotes sustainable recreation within an accessible urban location served by public transport, walking and cycling routes. By providing year-round sports facilities within an established sporting venue, the development supports health and wellbeing objectives while making efficient use of previously developed recreational land.

The proposed development comprises a relatively simple steel-framed sporting structure designed to provide durable, year-round recreational facilities within an established sporting venue. The proposal represents the efficient use of an existing storage area within the wider sports grounds and avoids the loss of active playing fields or recreational open space.

The structures have been designed to provide a long operational lifespan with relatively straightforward maintenance requirements. Their simple form and construction allow flexibility for future adaptation, alteration or replacement should sporting needs change over time, thereby supporting the long-term sustainability objectives of the policy.

The development utilises a lightweight construction approach which limits material requirements compared with more substantial built forms. Where practicable, materials will be sourced responsibly, and consideration will be given to the use of recycled and recyclable components within the construction process. The steel frame construction also provides opportunities for reuse and recycling at the end of the structure's operational life.

Taken together, the proposal represents a proportionate and sustainable form of development which supports health and wellbeing objectives whilst making efficient use of land and resources in accordance with the aims of Policy Env 7.

## 2.8. Policy Conclusion

### Overall Planning Balance

The proposed development represents a modest enhancement to an established sporting facility and delivers a range of benefits that align with both the strategic objectives and detailed policies of National Planning Framework 4 and City Plan 2030.

The proposal will broaden opportunities for sport and recreation within the long-established Raeburn Place sports grounds through the provision of modern, year-round padel tennis facilities. In doing so, it supports increased participation in physical activity and contributes positively towards the City Plan 2030 objective of creating a sustainable city which supports physical and mental wellbeing. The development will provide enhanced opportunities for exercise, recreation and social interaction, contributing to healthier and more active communities.

The application site occupies an accessible urban location at the heart of an established 20-minute neighbourhood, serving residents of Stockbridge, Inverleith, Canonmills, the New Town and surrounding communities. The proposed facilities will be readily accessible by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, reducing reliance on private vehicle travel and supporting the City's wider placemaking and sustainability objectives.

Importantly, the proposal represents an investment in and enhancement of an existing recreational asset rather than the loss of one. The development is located on land currently utilised for storage and ancillary purposes and does not result in the loss of existing playing fields, active sports pitches or meaningful recreational open space. The proposal therefore strengthens the role of Raeburn Place as an important sporting and community destination whilst retaining the established recreational function of the wider grounds.

The assessment contained within this Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the Inverleith Conservation Area, does not adversely affect important skyline views or protected townscape characteristics, and can be accommodated without prejudice to the wider environmental, recreational and flood management objectives applicable to the site.

When considered as a whole, the proposal represents a well-designed and proportionate addition to an established sporting campus which supports health and wellbeing, enhances recreational provision and contributes positively to the continued evolution of one of Edinburgh's longstanding sporting venues. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with, and draw support from, the Development Plan and other material considerations.

### 3. Conclusion

This Planning Statement has assessed the proposed development against the relevant provisions of National Planning Framework 4, City Plan 2030 and other material considerations.

The proposal seeks planning permission for the construction of two covered padel tennis courts together with associated access, landscaping and ancillary works within the established Raeburn Place sports grounds. The development represents a modest and carefully considered enhancement to an existing sporting facility and forms part of the continued evolution and investment in sports and community infrastructure at Raeburn Place.

The assessment demonstrates that the proposal accords with the objectives of NPF4, particularly Policy 21 (Play, Recreation and Sport), by broadening opportunities for participation in sport and recreation and supporting health and wellbeing outcomes. The proposal also aligns with the strategic aims of City Plan 2030 through the enhancement of an established recreational asset within an accessible urban location that serves surrounding neighbourhoods and contributes positively to the principles of a sustainable and healthy city.

Importantly, the development is located on land currently utilised for storage and ancillary purposes and does not result in the loss of existing playing fields, active sports pitches or meaningful recreational open space. The proposal therefore strengthens and diversifies the sporting offer available at Raeburn Place whilst maintaining the established recreational function of the wider grounds.

The proposal has been carefully designed and positioned having regard to its location within the Inverleith Conservation Area, the surrounding townscape, the Edinburgh Design Guidance and the identified skyline and view considerations associated with Inverleith Park. The assessment concludes that the development preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, does not adversely affect important views or skyline features, and can be accommodated without prejudice to the wider environmental qualities of the site.

When considered against the Development Plan as a whole, the proposal delivers clear sporting, recreational and community benefits and represents an appropriate form of development within an established sporting campus. It is therefore considered to accord with the Development Plan and other material considerations.



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