

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 12 1984

date entered

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

1. Name

historic J.D. Tennant House

and/or common Rutherglen

2. Location

street & number 420 Rutherglen Road not for publication

city, town Longview vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Cowlitz code 015

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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Reuben C. Grendahl

street & number P.O. Box 141

city, town Longview vicinity of state Washington 98632

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cowlitz County Courthouse

street & number 207 North Fourth Street

city, town Kelso state Washington 98626

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Washington State Inventory of Cultural Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town 111 West 21st Avenue, Olympia state Washington 98504

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The J.D. Tennant House, also known as "Rutherglen," is a large Colonial Revival residence situated on the east slope of Mount Solo on the outskirts of Longview, Washington. Constructed in 1926, the building remains essentially intact, although varied uses over the years have necessitated a few minor alterations. Originally the focal point of a 50-acre site, the nominated property now encompasses slightly more than four acres and includes the main house, a detached garage that has been altered, and parts of an extensive garden.

The Tennant House is situated on the lower slope of Mount Solo, an isolated hill rising about 600 feet above the Columbia River floodplain. The main house, about three miles from the center of the town of Longview, is reached by a private access road branching off the Mount Solo highway. The property originally encompassed 50 acres--20 acres of hill land that slopes sharply down to the valley and 30 acres of bottom land which was developed as a dairy farm with a resident manager. The existing farmhouse and barn (now under separate ownership) located about a half-mile distant from the main house and surrounded by modern structures, are not included in this nomination.

The location of the Tennant House, about 130 feet above the floor of the valley, provides exceptional views to the south and east, encompassing a broad stretch of the Columbia River with industrial development along its banks, the planned city of Longview and, in the distance, the now-truncated peak of Mount St. Helens. The private access road, rising steeply from the valley floor, ends in a circular driveway at the rear or hill side of the house under an imposing porte cochère.

The dimensions of the three-story house are impressive: approximately 115 feet in length and 45 feet in width. The concrete foundation, enclosing a partial basement, has an exterior facing of rough-cut stone quarried on Mount Solo. The same stone was used for the three massive chimneys which rise high above the ridge lines of the hipped and gabled roofs. The lumber used in the construction of the house was of exceptional quality and was furnished by the Long-Bell Lumber Company, of which J.D. Tennant was vice president and general manager. The framework is of local kiln-dried Douglas fir, the lapped siding of western cedar. The roof is covered with cedar shingles with copper flashing and ridge finials.

The house is essentially rectangular in plan, with the large porte cochère projecting to the north, a one-story solarium extending from the west elevation, and a broad veranda along most of the south facade. Fenestration is typical of the style, with double-hung sash windows, six-over-one lights, occurring singly or in groups of two or three. Palladian-type windows appear in the four gable ends at the third-story level and three large, hip-roofed dormers are evenly spaced on the south roof slope.

Restrained classical detailing gives the exterior an understated elegance. Simple Doric columns support the porte cochère and the roof of the veranda, where they are placed in groups of four. Originally, the porte cochère and solarium wing were surmounted by classical balustrades, with short paneled posts and turned balusters. Dry rot necessitated their removal, but the present owner intends to restore them. Heavy modillions support the eaves under the simple boxed cornices with multiple mouldings. The exterior has always been painted white and the roof was originally green, but is now faded.

The interior plan comprises expansive day rooms on the first floor, bedroom suites on the second floor, and a ballroom on the third floor. The interior is exceptional in the use of decorative wood, tile, and plasterwork--the materials provided by local companies and the designs created by local craftsmen and women.

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The first floor is divided centrally by a foyer and stairhall which are entirely paneled in gum wood. The floors throughout the main level are of high quality natural finish oak. The broad main stairway with railings of turned balusters rises to an intermediary landing whence double returns continue to the second floor. A large (14½ feet by 17 feet) reception hall, adjacent to the foyer and also completely paneled in gum wood, provides a gracious access to the living room at the southwest end of the house.

The spacious living room (26 feet by 42 feet) has plastered walls including a plaster frieze of decorative motifs (fleur-de-lis, tulips, and quatre-foils). It is dominated by a handsome fireplace of glazed tile incorporating a forest scene in the overmantel. Double-hinged French doors in the northwest corner of the living room give access to the solarium, a small (13 feet by 15 feet) room with a floor of quarry tile and French doors and windows filling the three exterior walls. In the center of the room, a small fountain/pool is created by a low tiled circular wall.

The remaining space of the western wing of the main floor is taken by the library, perhaps the most interesting and certainly the most decorative of the many rooms of this large house. Completely paneled in "grainart," the library (16 feet by 16½ feet) presents an exuberant display of the craft of etched or, properly, sandblasted wood. Every wall surface, including the fireplace overmantel and the inner sides of the two sets of pocket doors, is covered with grainart panels depicting scenes of transportation and western life, sports, and bird and floral motifs. The realistic designs--oiled, stained, and lightly tinted--provide a richness of color and texture, making this intimate space one of the most exciting in the house. The ornamented paneled doors opposite the fireplace wall open to reveal shelves for books, special provisions for a gun rack, and drawers for shells.

In the eastern wing of the main floor is the dining room (17 feet by 22 feet), which has a wainscoting of gum wood and plastered upper walls with a stenciled frieze. In the ceiling, a narrow molding defines a large oval, which is frescoed with delicate garlands. The corners are filled with canvas painted with decorative griffins and scrolls, echoing the design of the wooden grills covering the radiators. The adjacent breakfast room (15½ feet by 19½ feet) also has a painted ceiling, with sky and clouds in the central oval and floral scrolls in the corners. One wall of this room includes built-in cabinetry and a fireplace whose tiled face incorporates Mayan-derived ornament. The butler's pantry, remodeled kitchen, powder room, and servants' stairs complete this wing of the house.

The second floor consists of several suites, the most elaborate being the master bedroom suite in the south wing directly over the living room. Each room on this floor, as on the floor below, has an individual character, provided by varying the design motifs in plaster work friezes and in the wooden grills which conceal the radiators positioned under the windows. In addition, the four bathrooms on this floor are noteworthy for the extensive use of matte-glazed tile, each one being quite distinct in color, decoration, and layout. Bathroom accessories, such as towel racks, soap dishes, toothbrush and paper holders, are all formed of the distinctive tile for the particular room and are integrated into the total design.

Most of the third floor is given over to the ballroom, a large unobstructed space the entire width and almost the entire length of the house. An area for a regulation size billiard table was provided at one end. The room is entirely finished and decorated with bas-reliefs of birds and animals set intermittently in the plaster walls. At the eastern end, two bedrooms, with a bathroom placed between them, served as maids' rooms.

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Additional servants' quarters were provided on the second floor of the detached garage. This small building, located to the northeast of the main house, was very similar to it in design. The upper story gable ends contain Palladian windows, and the roof forms, stone chimney, lapped cedar siding, and classical details follow the design of the larger building. The upper story remains intact. At the ground level, the original hinged doors of the three-bay garage were replaced by modern fixed-sash windows when the space was converted by a previous owner to a caretaker's apartment. The basement of the garage building contained the original heating plant for the main house, but this system is no longer in operation, and the house is now heated electrically. Due to its extensive alterations, this garage is not considered to be a contributing element of this nomination.

An extensive landscaping plan was part of the integrated overall design of the site. The hillside behind the house was terraced, with native plant material bordering miles of footpaths for leisurely strolls. A rock garden with sunken pools survives near the circular driveway at the foot of the terraced slope. Existing trees and other plantings were preserved and new shrubs and specimen plantings were added. Most of the landscaping scheme is now overgrown, but the outline and basic features of the plan can still be seen. The orchards and sunken gardens developed on the lower slope below the house (and outside the boundaries of this nomination) are barely visible today. The planned tennis courts and large swimming pool were never built.

The estate today remains in remarkably good condition. The main house is intact, with modernization of the kitchen the only noticeable alteration. The modification of the garage space was a major change in the dependent building, but the waning of the elaborate gardens is due more to a lack of maintenance than a conscious attempt at alteration. The isolation of the property has helped to preserve its marvelous views of the Columbia Valley and to protect the historic character of the site.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1926 **Builder/Architect** Miller & King, general contractors

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The J.D. Tennant House is significant because of its association with one of the founders of the planned city of Longview and for its distinguished architectural design, which utilizes the distinctive products of the Long-Bell Lumber Company. In the absence of R.A. Long, president of the lumber company and acknowledged town father, J.D. Tennant, as vice president and general manager, became the local man-in-charge and along with others, guided the planning and development of the new sawmill site and the creation of the company town. His own home--in an isolated location on the slope of a high hill commanding a view of the townsite, the mill operation, and the Columbia River--was a tour-de-force of local mill products and craftsmanship and was justly regarded as the showplace of the Longview area.

John Douglas Tennant (1882-1949) was a native of Maryland who grew up in the coal mining area of Pittsburgh, Kansas. Around 1900, Tennant chose to pursue a career in the lumber industry. Working his way up through the ranks in mills and yards in Arkansas, Kansas, and Louisiana, he eventually arrived in Kansas City, where the corporate headquarters of the multifaceted Long-Bell Lumber Company were located. He was manager of the manufacturing division by 1914 and was made a member of the board of directors. He became a vice president in 1920, and shortly thereafter he was placed in charge of the company's proposed development in the Pacific Northwest.

Long-Bell had grown from the small lumber yard started by R.A. Long and Victor Bell in Columbus, Kansas, in 1875 to a vast lumbering empire--now solely owned by Long--with annual sales of \$50 million and corporate headquarters in the R.A. Long Building (in 1907, the tallest office building in Kansas City). But their long-working stands of timber in the South were giving out, and the company looked to the West for new prospects to continue its success. Tennant was one of the company officials who accompanied R.A. Long to Washington State in 1919 to assess the vast stands of timber. The decision was made to purchase nearly 70,000 acres of virgin forest in Cowlitz County. At the same time, a site was chosen for a sawmill at the point where the Cowlitz River flows into the Columbia. By 1922, Long realized that a community would have to be developed along with the mill and considerably more land was purchased for a townsite in the valley.

Designed by J.C. Nichols (developer of the famed Country Club district in suburban Kansas City) and his associates, the planned city of Longview began to take shape in 1923. The planners deliberately followed the standard grid pattern of most speculative city layouts, producing numerous corner lots, much in demand, and standard-sized lots of uniform width and depth. A few diagonal streets angled out from a central square, where a major hotel, library, and other civic buildings were to be located.

Many executives and employees of Long-Bell were involved with the planning and development of the town of Longview. R.A. Long, of course, was the guiding hand behind its creation, but he ran the company from headquarters in Kansas City and always resided there. Of the directors, only two--S.M. Morris and J.D. Tennant--became original residents of the new city and devoted their full time to the western enterprise. Morris was general manager in charge of city development and Tennant was general manager of the mill operation, responsible for the design and construction of the mill, the logging railroad, and the start-up of lumber production.

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Perhaps because of this, it was Tennant who decided to build his house not within the boundaries of the new city but on the slope of Mount Solo overlooking the valley and the mill complex. The very best lumber from the company's tracts of virgin forest was used in the home's construction. This enormous house exhibits standard features of the Colonial Revival Style, which was also utilized for a number of Longview's civic buildings. Furthermore, the virtuoso display of the library paneling attested to the ability of the company to diversify into highly specialized products within the context of the larger mill operation. Indeed, it may have been Tennant's personal enthusiasm for "grainart" that sparked its commercial production at Long-Bell. The company magazine, Log of Long-Bell (May 1927) noted that: "The idea of the paneled library was Mr. Tennant's own. Mr. Tennant conceived the plan of ornamenting his library with sandblasted pictures first because of their rare beauty and secondly to show how wood can be used to beautify a home..." The Tennant library (1926) was the first large-scale design produced by Long-Bell craftsmen. After its completion, the grainart department at Long-Bell began to produce sandblasted "grainart" panels in abundance. More than a dozen men and women were employed in the various phases of its production. A few of them later formed their own businesses to produce individual panels, but the market apparently waned during the Depression and very little was produced after the prime period of 1927-1930.

Although he was most directly concerned with the operation of the mill, J.D. Tennant also took an active interest in the affairs of the town. Longview was not a company town in the traditional sense. Although conceived, founded, and built through the efforts of the Long-Bell Lumber Company, it was always meant to function as an independent municipality. Real estate within the town was privately owned, businesses were established by individual entrepreneurs, and government functions were performed by duly elected officials. Tennant, as a citizen as well as a director of the company, devoted his energies to community service. When the need for a hospital became evident, he organized and became chairman of the Longview Memorial Hospital Association. He was also a member of the first board of directors of the local YMCA and belonged to two local chapters of fraternal organizations. His life, therefore, was intimately involved with both the town's major industry and its civic affairs.

Other men associated with the founding of Longview built substantial homes in the new city. However, few of these structures rival the Tennant House in scale or quality of design, making it one of the most architecturally distinguished homes in the city. The city's other notable homes should properly be considered within the context of a possible historic district, encompassing the planned civic center, commercial district, and earliest residential areas. The Tennant House, because of its isolated location, stands apart from these other historic buildings. In its siting, in its architecture, and in its association with a prominent founding father, it has long been recognized as a Longview landmark.

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Section 30, Township 8 North, Range 2 West, and Section 25, Township 8 North, Range 3 West, said monument being located 109.3 feet north of one quarter corner common to said sections, said point of beginning being on the north line of the parcel described in Volume 742, Page 298, Auditor's File 665,486) thence north 87° 47' 00" west 38.37 feet, thence south 52° 20' 00" west 217 feet, thence south 63° 33' 00" west 204.80 feet, thence south 24° 08' 00" west 128.70 feet, thence south 18° 10' 00" east 175.98 feet, thence north 83° 50' 00" east 267.03 feet, thence south 76° 16' 00" east 115.71 feet, thence north 50° 04' 00" east 101.50 feet, thence north 28° 20' 00" east 95.46 feet thence north 16° 45' 00" west 382.31 feet to the point of beginning. Subject to easements, restrictions, and reservations as contained in Real Estate Contract dated April 23, 1971, and recorded in Vol. 770, Page 1,511, Auditor's File 715,845, records of Cowlitz County.