

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

1. Name

historic

and/or common ~~Properties Related to the~~ Kirkland Land and Improvement Company

2. Location

street & number Incorporated limits of Kirkland _____ not for publication

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 2nd-Al Swift

state Washington code 053 county King code 033

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 type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic Group	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input 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 Multiple Ownership (see attached sheets)

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. King County Courthouse

street & number 516 Third Avenue

city, town Seattle state Washington 98104

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(See continuation sheet
title item no. 6 page 1.)

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records

city, town _____ state

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(All Sites)

King County Historic Sites Survey

1978

King County Department of Planning and Community Development

Seattle, Washington 98104

(Peter Kirk Building)

Washington State Cultural Resource Survey: King County

December 30, 1977

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

111 West 21st Avenue

Olympia, Washington 98504

The Peter Kirk Building is entered in both the National and State
Registers of Historic Places.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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 five buildings comprising this nomination are the Peter Kirk Building, the Joshua Sears Building, the Masonic Lodge Building, the Dr. Trueblood House, and the Loomis House. They are related to the transformation of Kirkland settlement circa 1888-1893 when Peter Kirk and Leigh Hunt attempted to create a center for steel production. In conjunction with their plans to build a steel mill, Kirk, Hunt, and several other businessmen began a speculative land company -- the Kirkland Land and Improvement Company. About 1,200 acres of land were purchased and in 1888 a townsite was platted that was named in Kirk's honor. The houses and buildings that remain from Kirk's venture are significant as symbols of 19th-century capitalism and land speculation. They are a part of the transformation of a pioneer settlement into an industrial boom town. The boom collapsed, but the town eventually prospered.

Kirkland's location on the east side of Lake Washington was an important factor in the decision to develop an integrated iron and steel works there. Kirk believed that the construction of a ship canal from Puget Sound to Lake Washington would mean business for his mill. Trade with China and western South America in steel rails would be competitive with eastern steel-rail producers because of lower shipping costs. In addition, Kirk anticipated completion of a rail line from Snoqualmie Pass, via Sallal Prairie and the Summit Mining District, to Kirkland. This railroad, which was still incomplete by the financial panic of 1893, would have brought iron ore to Kirkland. Kirkland was connected by rail with Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern Railway, five miles distant.

Land for the town was cleared during the years 1891 and 1892, after which Kirk's engineers surveyed and laid out the townsite. The plan consists of two grids laid on either side of Market Street, which runs north to south. The grid east of Market is the one most commonly used by land speculators (N.-S. and E.-W.). The grid west of Market is less common and intersects Market at roughly 45 degrees (the streets run N.W.-S.E. and N.E.-S.W.). Originally the plan was to have been broken up by elements which gave it a slightly Beaux-Arts character. Two open spaces were provided, one an elliptical plaza in front of the proposed railroad depot, southwest of Market on the lake shore, and a small polygonal area north of the proposed commercial area. The commercial area was to have been centered in a diamond at the intersection of Market and Piccadilly (now 7th Avenue), with a diamond ring road around it. There also was to have been an S-shaped avenue (Bellevue) which was to have connected Lake Avenue with Piccadilly. The original steel mill site was planned to lie south of Lake Avenue, east of the intersection of Bellevue Avenue and Lake Avenue. In 1890 the plan was revised, eliminating all of the design elements except the two grids and Lake Avenue. Even though a brick works had been erected at the western end of the original mill site, the steel mill site was moved a mile east to a 120-acre site near Rose Hill and Forbes Lake. This occurred because the Northern Pacific had acquired the Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern Railroad and refused to extend a rail line beyond Rose Hill.

After plats were recorded and streets graded, land sales and construction began. Along with the houses that were springing up, five brick commercial buildings were erected (from bricks manufactured in Kirkland). These buildings were actually sited about a half mile from the town center because the land company would not relinquish land near the lake, hoping to escalate its value. Boston millionaire Joshua Sears built one of the five buildings, designed to combine a bank and offices. Two others were built to

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provide office and commercial space, accommodating "walk-in" business on the street level and offices on the second level. Nearby, a wealthy Seattleite put up a 3-story hotel, and next to it, the Peter Kirk Building was erected. Only three commercial buildings remain of the 5-building town center: the Peter Kirk Building, the Joshua Sears Building, and the Masonic Lodge Building, all built in 1891. The two houses which are nominated, the Dr. Trueblood House and the Loomis House, are examples of the wood frame residences built in 1889 to provide for the expected influx of people coming to work at the steel mill. The architecture of the five nominated structures reflects 19th-century vernacular building practices, as well as the stylistic conventions of the period. One influence is the Italianate, evident in the Joshua Sears Building, the Masonic Lodge Building, and the Dr. Trueblood House. The configuration of the Loomis House is that of a Queen Anne cottage, while the Peter Kirk Building illustrates the Victorian Romanesque.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTIES RELATED TO THE KIRKLAND

LAND AND IMPROVEMENT COMPANY

1. Peter Kirk Building (620 Market Street): 1891

Square 2-story red and buff brick Victorian Romanesque commercial structure (now used as arts center). Round-arch second-floor windows, 3/4 circular oriel window-turret with conical roof, sheet metal cornice and pediment, round-arch entrances. (On National Register of Historic Places.)

2. Joshua Sears Building (701 Market Street): 1891

Red brick 2-story polygonal Italianate commercial structure (originally bank, now used for apartments). Concrete-faced string courses and base, round-arch windows on south facade, sheet-metal cornice with large modillions. Entrance emphasized by sheet-metal Ionic capitals supporting broken entablature with segmental pediment. Pilasters with brackets supporting pediment frame window above.

3. Masonic Lodge Building (700 Market Street): 1891

Italianate 2-story red brick commercial building. Sheet-metal cornice with modillions and dentils and ornate sheet-metal hood moldings over second floor windows. Three cast-iron Doric columns on west ground facade; pilasters between windows on second floor; simple sheet-metal entablature running between ground and second floors.

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4. Dr. Trueblood House (127 7th Avenue): 1889

L-shaped residence with shiplap siding and corner boards, Italianate rectangular bay window with hipped roof, plain window surrounds with shelf-cornice, slender porch columns with curvilinear sawn brackets.

5. Loomis House (304 8th Avenue): 1889

Queen-Anne 1½-story residence with shiplap siding, fishscale shingles in gable ends, truncated hipped roof, chamfered gable corners, colored glass window borders, turned porch posts and soffit grille.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The original survey was conducted by Lael Kuhl in 1977-78 while employed as a King County historic sites surveyor. Further survey work was conducted by Robert D. Garwood in 1981. Historical research was conducted by Peter Neurath while employed as an intern for King County. Subsurface testing was not conducted and the nomination is presented as a partial inventory. Historic and architectural merit was the criterion on which the nomination is based. Six additional company houses were initially considered for nomination, but appeared too altered to qualify. In addition, the site of the Great Western Iron and Steel Works was not included since there are no above-ground remains and archaeological excavation seems unlikely. The only structure which has been restored is the Peter Kirk Building. No districts were included due to the scattered nature of the buildings and sites involved. It should be noted that this scattered development reflects the fact that the original proposed development was never completed. The results of the survey and the inventory have been included in local community planning. In addition, the information has been integrated into the revision of the 1964 King County Comprehensive Plan, which is awaiting approval. The information has also been utilized by the State to confirm compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

8. Significance

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

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
n/a	n/a

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Kirkland is one of the few planned industrial towns in Washington. Its founders, an English industrialist, Peter Kirk, and a Seattle investor, Leigh S.J. Hunt, intended it to become a center for steel production -- "the Pittsburgh of the West." Five extant structures (three commercial buildings and two houses) represent the late-nineteenth century period of capitalism and promotion critical to the town's origins. The proposed steel industry never developed but Kirkland nonetheless survived its speculative beginnings.

Peter Kirk came from an English family that for years had prosperously run an iron manufacturing and founding business. With an iron works in Workington, England, Kirk himself was a successful steel manufacturer, specializing in steel rails. But after business slacked off in the early 1880's, Kirk journeyed to America in 1886 in search of investment opportunities. Prospects in America were favorable, for the Civil War had markedly stimulated industrial growth. After the war, Americans set about webbing the country with railroads to open new markets for manufactured goods and facilitate the flow of raw materials to factories. The demand for rails nurtured the nation's steel industry. In the West, the industry was young, the first cast of pig iron having been poured in 1881 at Pueblo, Colorado, just five years before Kirk made his first trip to America. Knowing that iron deposits had been discovered in Snoqualmie Pass, in Washington Territory's King County, Kirk passed up an invitation to invest in Pittsburgh in favor of building a steel mill in the Pacific Northwest. From there he could supply the western railroads, and possibly China and South America, with steel rails. Kirk first planned to build a branch of his English steel works -- Moss Bay Hematite Iron and Steel, Limited -- at Sallal Prairie, 17 miles west of Snoqualmie Pass Summit. In addition to iron ore, supplies of coal and limestone (necessary for steel production) would be close by. But the plan was foiled by passage of the 1887 Alien Act, which prohibited aliens from owning land in America. As an alien, Kirk would be unable to buy land, lease mines, or sign contracts.

About this time, Kirk met Leigh S.J. Hunt, a Seattle businessman and investor who was interested in land development. Hunt convinced Kirk that together they could develop land, build a town, and construct an integrated iron and steel works on the east side of Lake Washington. Hunt, an American, could do everything Kirk was prohibited from doing under the Alien Act. Weighing his prospects in England and America, Kirk concluded he would do better to put all his energy into an American enterprise. In 1888, having decided to apply for American citizenship, Kirk announced that he was going to build a steel mill on the east side of Lake Washington, to be known as the Moss Bay Iron and Steel Works of America, and to employ 3,000 workers. In July of the same year, Kirk, Hunt, and two other Seattle businessmen, one of whom was A.A. Denny, incorporated the Kirkland Land and Improvement Company. The company rapidly acquired upwards of 1,200 acres of land on Lake Washington's east side and planned to build a town and a steel mill. The land was bought at roughly \$100 an acre, but was quickly listed in the company's assets at \$1,000 an acre, an inflation that was manifestly

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speculative. Land speculation, however, was nothing new to the West, where it was rampant and unapologetic. The transcontinental railroads were perhaps the most conspicuous speculators, receiving thousands of acres in subsidies from the federal government, and making and breaking towns by their decisions on where to build. Seattle, for instance, in 1873 was severely shocked, though not destroyed, by Northern Pacific's choice of Tacoma as its western terminus. Tacoma was ultimately chosen because it presented the railroad with the best opportunity for land speculation.

In any event, as a speculative undertaking, Kirkland was not unique. The question was raised whether Kirkland was really anything but a setup for land speculation. A newspaper, the Tacoma Ledger, in 1892 strongly suggested that the inchoate steel mill was a sham used to jack up land prices. Although begun in 1890, the mill consisted of little more than a few buildings and a token amount of machinery, and the Ledger implied that nothing more was intended. Kirk and his business associates had incorporated the Moss Bay Iron and Steel Works of America in 1888, only to reorganize the company as the Great Western Iron and Steel Works of America in 1890. Kirk, with small success, had tried to interest English investors in the reorganized venture, but Hunt had been more successful, having gained pledges from Eastern financiers to buy \$1 million in stock. A question that the Ledger indirectly posed was whether Kirkland's land values were deliberately inflated to \$1,000 an acre, thereby misrepresenting the value of the land company's assets to help attract other investors. When completed, the steel mill was to produce steel rails, which Kirk planned to market in the United States, China, and western South America. The western United States market would have comprised seven states: California, Montana, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, and Utah. One researcher has calculated that the market for rails for replacement and for new track in these seven states could have consumed two-thirds of the steel rails produced by Kirk's mill.

Since he would have had lower shipping costs, Kirk probably could have attracted business away from Eastern steel-rail producers. Trade with China would have been another matter, however. Even though Kirk's mill would have had the shortest all-water route to China from the United States, marketing steel rails in China would have been difficult at best because the United States refrained from pressing the Chinese government for railroad concessions. On the other hand, the proximity of Kirk's mill to western South America would have allowed it to compete favorably with the European firms that were South America's chief suppliers of steel rails. Once the steel mill was in operation, the plan was to produce 6,000 tons of steel rails a week, a figure to be exceeded only by Pittsburgh.

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Construction of the steel mill was accompanied by development of the town. Land for the town was cleared during the years 1891 and 1892, after which Kirk's engineers surveyed and laid out the townsite -- named in Kirk's honor. Plats were recorded, streets graded, and land sales begun. Along with the houses that were springing up, five brick commercial buildings were built. Of the five, three survive: the Peter Kirk Building, the Joshua Sears Building, and the Masonic Lodge Building. But the success of the town hung upon the success of the steel mill, which had yet to produce a single steel rail. Not only was the steel mill itself far from complete when the national financial panic of 1893 struck, but there remained a gap in the railroad system that was to serve the mill: the 17 miles of track between the town of Sallal Prairie and the Summit Mining District had yet to be laid. Without that track, no ore could be shipped to Kirkland. When the 1893 depression hit, Kirk was still trying to convert the remainder of his English holdings into American dollars, and Hunt was deeply in debt. For Kirk's mill, and for the iron and steel trade across the country, the year was a disaster. First one and then the remainder of Kirk's Eastern investors refused to pay their stock subscriptions. To go on, the Great Western Iron and Steel Works was forced to borrow heavily from the Kirkland Land and Improvement Company. Even so, the steel mill failed, and by 1899 the last of the company's assets were sold to repay the land company.

But neither Kirk nor Kirkland was finished. Though Kirk lost what he had invested in the steel company, he still had his unconverted English holdings and his investment in the Kirkland Land and Improvement Company. As for Kirkland, it never became an industrial center; yet, partly in expectation of becoming one, it survived. Kirk continued with one business or another until his death in 1916. All along he believed that the construction of a ship canal from Puget Sound to Lake Washington -- finally begun in 1912 and completed in 1917 -- would result in business for Kirkland. But even with the Lake Washington Ship Canal, Kirkland never became an industrial center. Attempts were made over the years to industrialize the town but none had lasting effect. A woolen mill, begun in 1892, carried on for several decades, changed ownership several times, and finally failed for want of capital and because of poor management and poor markets. Nonetheless, Kirkland came to be eminently habitable. In 1905 the town incorporated as a third class city and, as time went on, worked to solve its community problems. Following construction of the Lake Washington Floating Bridge in 1940, connecting the east and west sides of the lake, Kirkland was evidently on its way to becoming a suburb. Construction of the Evergreen Point Bridge in 1962 further eased the flow of east-west traffic, making Kirkland a convenient place to work or live. Today, many consider Kirkland to be the most liveable city on Lake Washington.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bagley, Clarence. History of King County. Chicago: S.J. Clark Publishers, 1929.
Ely, Arline. Our Foundering Fathers: The Story of Kirkland. Kirkland, WA.:
Kirkland Public Library, 1975.
"Kirkland." Tacoma Sunday Ledger. October 31, 1892. pp. 9 & 12.
Sherrard, William Robert. "The Kirkland Steel Mill." Unpublished M.B.A. Thesis,
University of Washington, 1958.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property all lots less than one acre

Quadrangle name Kirkland

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References See individual inventory forms.

A	Zone	Easting	Northing	B	Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual inventory forms

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
state	n/a	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kjristine R. Lund, King County Historic Preservation Officer, and
Robert D. Garwood, Architectural Historian

organization King County Office of
Historic Preservation

date August 21, 1981

street & number W226, 516 Third Avenue

telephone (206) 344-7503

city or town Seattle

state Washington 98104

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Jacob E. Johnson

date June 21, 1982

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Emma Jane Saye

date 7-29-82

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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date entered

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Kirkland Land and Improvement Company Thematic Resources
State WA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Masonic Lodge Building

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Delores Byers 8/4/82

Attest

2. Loomis House

Substantive Review

Keeper

Bruce M. Byers 8-2-82

Attest

Emma Jane Saye 7-29-82

3. Trueblood, Dr., House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Delores Byers 8/4/82

Attest

4. Sears, Joshua, Building

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

Delores Byers 8/2/82

Attest

5. Kirk, Peter, Building
(Previously listed)

Keeper

Attest

6.

Keeper

Attest

7.

Keeper

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest