

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000781 Date Listed: 6/21/91

Oscar Blomeen House                      King                      WA  
Property Name                              County                      State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for* Antonietta J. Rice  
Signature of the Keeper

6/26/91  
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Description: The roof material is amended to read wood: shingle.

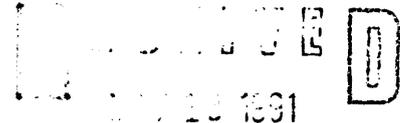
This information was confirmed with Leonard Garfield of the Washington State Historic Preservation Office.

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DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the Instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Blomeen, Oscar, House

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 324 "B" St. N.E.

not for publication

city, town Auburn

vicinity

state Washington code WA county King code 033 zip code 98002

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

#### Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	sites
<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	structures
<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

4/12/91  
Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Antoinette Lee

6/21/91

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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## 6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

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## 7. Description

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman

Other: Late Victorian vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls wood: weatherboard

wood: shingle

roof other: composition

other

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located on a double lot in a residential neighborhood near the commercial center of Auburn, the Oscar Blomeen House is a wood frame post-Victorian residence reflecting both the Craftsman style of its era and elements derived from an earlier vernacular idiom. The idiosyncratic but proportional design, attributed to the owner-builder, is distinguished by an engaged corner tower, a full veranda, and a complex roof plan with bracketed overhanging eaves. Built in 1913-14, the Blomeen House is among the most distinctive and best preserved historic houses in the city.

The Blomeen House is a two story structure built on a rectangular plan with a cross gabled roof. The house measures roughly 36 feet across the front and rear elevations, and 30 feet along the north and south sides. The house rests on a rock-faced concrete block foundation and is constructed of a balloon frame composed of two inch by six inch studs, two inch by 10 inch floor joists (with eight inch by eight inch posts supporting the first floor joists) and two inch by six inch roof rafters. The exterior of the house is sided with narrow gauge cedar clapboards on the first and second stories, capped by wide architrave trim. Above the architrave, the gable ends are faced with decorative shingles laid in courses of alternating width. The roof is covered with shakes that replace the original wood shingles.

The dominant roof of the house is a gently pitched side gable with widely overhanging flared eaves, which slopes to the first story on the front and rear elevations. A cross gabled box bay projects on the facade above the front entry. A similar bay window projects from the second story of the north side elevation. At the southwest corner of the house, the engaged tower rises the full height of the house and is crowned with a conical roof with flared eaves and underscored with elongated console-like brackets. Along the raking cornice of the gable ends, the eaves are trimmed with plain vergeboards and supported by decorative knee braces. Elsewhere, the eaves are underscored by console brackets. A metal finial (not original) crowns the tower roof.

The Blomeen House is lighted by the original wood frame windows with plain surrounds and projecting hood moldings. Most of the windows are double hung one-over-one sash, some with leaded upper lights. Across the facade, windows are grouped in sets of three (arranged in a modified Palladian motif on the second story bays). The front entry is a single door with glazed upper panel, flanked by multipaned sidelights. A single leaf side entry allows access on the south side of the house.

The front and south side elevations are sheltered by a one-story veranda that extends eight feet from the facade. The veranda is composed of a wood deck, Tuscan columns resting on concrete block bases, and a plain architrave. The porch roof projects beyond the cornice and features a boxed cornice with elongated brackets. The porch railing is composed of turned balusters. A flight of concrete steps

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provides access to the porch and leads to the front entry. To the east of the veranda on the south side is a box bay window, sheltered by a hipped roof, supported by console brackets, and lighted by double hung windows. The rear elevation features a porch that shelters the back door.

The interior of the Blomeen House includes about 1,100 square feet on a relatively open plan, with four rooms on the first floor (including front parlor, sitting room, formal dining room, and kitchen) and four rooms on the second floor. The ceiling height is nine feet on the first floor and eight feet on the second floor. The walls are plaster on lath, although some sheetrock has been installed during the rehabilitation where plaster was seriously damaged.

The interior retains excellent integrity. Interior trim is executed in fir, and includes classical door and window casings with entablature hoods, picture railings and baseboard moldings. The front parlor, which is lighted by the circular bay of the corner tower, is separated from the rear dining room by square Doric pillars resting on a solid rail. The drawing room features panelled wainscoting with a plate rail, box beam ceiling, built-in window seat, and built-in hutch with glazed cabinets. A fir staircase leads from the central hall to the upstairs. The staircase features a square newel post and balusters and panelled wainscoting along the wall. The upstairs bedrooms are organized around a central hall, and feature door surrounds with hoods, picture rails, and other trim. The upstairs includes the small nurses' operating room and adjacent assistant's room with built-in medicine and supply cabinet. Throughout the house the original fir floors have been replaced with oak. The interior rehabilitation included replacing rotting bathroom floors, patching plaster walls and ceilings, installing sheetrock on some extensively damaged walls, and sanding, staining, and varnishing the fir trim.

Located on the rear of the property is a one-story frame house built in 1911, which was the original Blomeen residence. This house is faced in clapboards and lighted by double-hung windows. The gable roof is sided in asphalt shingles. Based on historic photographs (c. 1913), the house has been modified through the enclosure of an open front porch and changes in fenestration. Because this structure has no architectural significance and does not share the same historical significance of the main house, it is not considered a contributing resource. Nearby is an historic two-car garage, with clapboard siding and parapet.

**Contributing Resources:**

- 1 house
- 1 garage

**Noncontributing Resources:**

- 1 house

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

 nationally     statewide     locallyApplicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Health/Medicine

Period of Significance

1913-1930

Significant Dates

1917

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Blomeen, Oscar (builder)

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Built in 1913-14 by a Swedish immigrant, the Oscar Blomeen House is a significant example of vernacular post-Victorian residential architecture in Auburn. The house reflects an adaptation of both the Craftsman idiom of the period and elements drawn from late Victorian picturesque house styles. A recent survey indicates that the Blomeen House is among the most elaborate and best preserved of the city's historic homes. In addition to its distinctive design, the house was the site of Auburn's first hospital, established during the influenza epidemic during World War I and later operated as a maternity hospital.

**Historic Background:** Located in the heart of the fertile White River Valley in southern King County, Auburn was first settled by Dr. Levi W. Ballard, who claimed a homestead in the area in the mid-1860s. In 1886, Ballard and his wife Mary filed a plat for a townsite on their land and called it Slaughter in honor of Lt. William Slaughter who died in the Indian Wars of 1855.

At the time, Slaughter was a small village of a few stores. But the regional economy boomed in the 1880s when hops became the valley's major cash crop. In 1891, the town council convened its first meeting, and in 1893, the community changed its name to the more sonorous Auburn. When the hops boom went bust in the early 1890s, many area farmers turned to dairying and a condensery was established in Auburn in 1903. The railroad, too, played an important role in the local economy in the late 19th century, culminating in 1913 when the Northern Pacific Railway established its western freight terminus in the city, and built a round house and repair shop. In 1914, Auburn was incorporated as a third class city. By 1920, the city had more than 3,000 residents, and a diverse economy that included a terra cotta factory (established in the 1890s) owned by the Gladding, McBean company, several wood product firms, the busy railroad shops and yards, and a prosperous hinterland of dairy and truck farmers producing for the nearby urban centers of Seattle and Tacoma. In 1930, the city boasted 5,000 residents.

Oscar Blomeen was born in Sweden in 1876, and immigrated to the United States in 1901, where he married Ellen Wennergen, another Swedish immigrant. Following the birth of their son Nels in 1909, the Blomeens moved to a house on E Street SW in Auburn. Oscar and his twin brother Carl opened a machine shop on Main Street and later Oscar went to work as a machinist for the Borden Condensery. Between 1911 and 1912, Oscar and Ellen Blomeen purchased two lots on what was then called Catalpa Street and is now known as B Street NE. They built a small frame house on the northern lot and, following the birth of daughters Elsie and Lela, made plans to build a larger house adjacent to it. According to family lore, disparaging remarks made by neighbors about the original house inspired Oscar

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to design a far grander home. County assessor records and family history indicate that Oscar himself drew the plans, hauled lumber from a Main Street lumber yard, and did the construction work, completing the job between 1913 and 1914.

By 1917, the Blomeens had moved to Bremerton where Oscar worked in the Navy shipyard. Thereafter, the Auburn house was rented to the Stone sisters, nurses who operated Auburn's first hospital in the home to treat patients of the 1917-1919 influenza epidemic. In the 1920s, the house was also used as a maternity hospital, and it was known locally as the "Baby Hospital." The small operating room and even smaller assistant's medicine room are still intact on the second floor. Surgeries were also performed here by Doctors Owen Taylor of Kent and Martin Lacey of Auburn, who later formed the Taylor-Kent hospital (forerunner of the Auburn General Hospital).

In 1950 Ellen Blomeen died, and in 1966 Oscar Blomeen sold the house to Ada Lowe, the current owner, three years before his death. In 1976, Ada, her husband Dan, and the rest of the family began a long-term restoration of the house, eventually repairing rotting floors, falling plaster walls and ceilings, and restaining the original fir trim. The restoration work was largely finished in 1990, with much work completed in the late 1980s by Mrs. Lowe's son Dennis Hefner.

**Architectural Significance:** The Blomeen House is a locally significant example of vernacular post-Victorian architecture, in which the owner-builder successfully combined the Craftsman influence of the period with elements of the earlier picturesque mode. The house is characterized by its unusual but proportionally pleasing combination of Craftsman-like features (broad gable roofs with overhanging eaves, brackets, ornate knee braces, and straightforward clapboard and shingle cladding) with a large corner tower with conical roof and wide veranda with spindle railing and Tuscan columns that reflect the transitional late Queen Anne period. In its combination of vernacular designs, the house is unique among architectural resources in Auburn.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Vine, Josephine Emmons, *Auburn: A Look Down Main Street*, Auburn Centennial Commission: Auburn, 1990, p. 69.  
"Blomeen House," *Auburn Community*, October 9, 1990.  
Rommel, Bruce, "From Private Home to Auburn Landmark," *Valley Daily News*, January 3, 1991, p. 1.  
Letter from Lela Blomeen Long (Oscar's daughter) to Jim Gorman, City of Auburn, July 29, 1988.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A	<u>10</u>	<u>558480</u>	<u>5239800</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1 and 2, Block 21, Meadow Addition, City of Auburn, and that adjacent driveway strip described in the settlement agreement as the south nine feet one inch of the following: beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 1, Block 2, Meadow Addition; thence east along the north line of Lot 1, 100.15 feet; thence north to the southeast corner of Lot 8, Block 1, New Auburn Addition; thence west along the south line of said Lot 8 to the southwest corner thereof; thence south to the point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with Oscar Blomeen.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/title	<u>Leonard Garfield, from information provided by Mrs. Ada Lowe</u>	date	<u>February 1991</u>
organization	<u>Lowe; owner</u>	telephone	<u>(206) 939-3088</u>
street & number	<u>324 "B" St. N.E.</u>	state	<u>Washington</u> zip code <u>98002</u>
city or town	<u>Auburn</u>		