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 | Brookland |

and/or common

2. Location

| East side of SR 1863 (Balsam Road), 0.4 mile North of junction with NC 25 (Church Street) |

| city, town | Flat Rock |

| state | North Carolina |

| code | 037 |

| county | Henderson |

| congressional district | Eleventh |

| code | 089 |

3. Classification

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4. Owner of Property

| name | Mr. and Mrs. C.E. Staton, Jr. |

| street & number | P.O. Box 193 |

| city, town | Flat Rock |

| vicinity of | |

| state | North Carolina 28731 |

5. Location of Legal Description

| courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. | Henderson County Courthouse |

| street & number | |

| city, town | Hendersonville |

| state | North Carolina 28739 |

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

| title | N/A |

| has this property been determined eligible? | yes | no |

| date | |

| federal | state | county | local |

| depository for survey records | N/A |

| city, town | |

| state | |
Like many of the antebellum summer houses built for wealthy low-country families in and around the mountain resort community of Flat Rock, where an unbroken chain of out-of-state owners continued to use, enjoy, and improve the old estates after the Civil War and into the twentieth century, Brookland reflects the changing tastes and requirements of its various owners through its long history. The imposing and well-maintained residence retains the basic massing and plan and some of the interior details of the original late Federal/early Greek Revival house built in 1836, combined with Colonial Revival inspired expansions and alterations introduced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The house stands on a tract of about nine and one-half acres between Hendersonville and Flat Rock in Henderson County. A twentieth century subdivision now surrounds the property, isolating Brookland from the main body of nineteenth century summer residences of Flat Rock (NRHD) to which it is historically and architecturally related. But the spaciousness of the tract, its fine landscaping, and the collection of outbuildings buffer the house from the intrusive development and reinforce its historic character.

The exterior of the house retains its basic ca. 1836 form, though it received later nineteenth century expansions, finish, and detailing. It is a two-story, double pile building of frame construction, with a one-story, one-bay late nineteenth century extension on the east side elevation. The exterior walls are covered in pebbledash introduced about 1892. This textured stucco wall surfacing was a popular treatment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in several mountain resort communities in western North Carolina, though it is relatively rare in other parts of the state. The pebbledash and other turn-of-the-century embellishments at Brookland are not surprising; many of the early houses of the low-country estates in the exclusive Flat Rock area received extensive alterations and improvements from their later owners.

The front (north) elevation is five bays wide, with the two central bays projecting forward slightly in a pedimented central pavilion. Though the question remains unresolved after a simple visual inspection, it appears more likely that this pavilion is a Colonial Revival addition rather than a late Georgian feature of the original house. Windows retain their original sash configuration—if not their original sash—with nine-over-nine sash on the first floor, and nine-over-six above. All other exterior finish is late nineteenth century. These include the wide board frames around the windows with applied crown moldings along the tops of the lintel boards, the wide vertical corner boards marking the ends of the facade and the pavilion, and the paired entrances with French doors and flanking full-height paneled shutters. The one-story Colonial Revival porch projecting from the pavilion is unusually deep; its shallow pedimented gable cover is supported by paired columns at the front and rear on either side.

The house is protected by a high hip roof, which appears to be a late-nineteenth century upward extension of the lower hip that covered the structure originally. Three corbeled interior brick chimneys pierced the roof; the tallest is centered on the ridge of the hip, and the other two rise midway along the east and west slopes.
A full-width hip roof porch shelters the first floor of the three-bay rear elevation, supported by columns similar to those of the front porch. A small pedimented attic gable is centered on the roof above the central bay, which projects forward slightly, again probably a late nineteenth century feature.

The spacious interior follows the expected center hall plan, with a transverse partition in the hall containing a chimney and dividing the hall into front and rear sections. Simple Federal and Greek Revival elements survive in combination with later, more elaborate Colonial Revival finish. Most interior doors are original six-panel, flat panel Federal types with narrow applied moldings. Some are set within symmetrically molded Greek Revival surrounds with corner blocks; others are in replacement Colonial Revival frames. Most mantels also appear to be original, and are simple variations of the basic Greek Revival post-and-lintel type. The most elaborate mantel in the house is a neo-Federal mantel in the first floor front hall; this features applied swags and other ornament and is said to have been added around 1919. The rear hall contains an open-string stair which rises along the south wall to a landing and continues to the second floor along the hall partition. The narrow square-in-section balusters and the ramped and molded handrail could possibly be original. The paneled wainscot with wide applied moldings, which appears only in this rear hall, is a twentieth century feature. Elsewhere in the house, simple molded baseboards, some original, others later, carry beneath the plaster walls.

The second floor repeats the plan of the first and is similarly finished. The central bedroom above the front hall contains a mantel composed of fluted pilasters supporting a simple shelf. This may be an original feature, though the overmantel with a broken pediment and half-round urn is a Colonial Revival addition.

Several outbuildings of varying age remain on the grounds. These include a small, cruciform plan dwelling house (probably late nineteenth century), said to have been servants' quarters, with pebbledash walls and intersecting hip roofs; a small pebble-dash garden house of similar vintage adjacent; an early twentieth century three-stall garage with a shingled gable front; a small brick structure with a pyramidal cover (formerly the carbide gas house), a small shed; and a second small frame house with a hip roof, possibly mid-nineteenth century and said to have been a guest house or servants' quarters.

The grounds are planted with a variety of hardwoods and coniferous trees, shrubs, and flowers.
8. Significance

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Brookland is one of the finest of the nineteenth century summer houses of the low-country South Carolinians and Georgians who established a fashionable mountain retreat in and around the community of Flat Rock in Henderson County. Like many of the area's ante-bellum houses, which saw continued use and improvements by their low-country owners well after the Civil War, Brookland reflects the changing needs and tastes of its owners through the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century. In its present form the house retains original late Federal/early Greek Revival form and features beside later Colonial Revival expansions and finishes. The substantial two-story house was built in 1836 for Charles Edmondston, a wealthy Charleston businessman. In 1841 it was purchased by Edmund Molyneux, the British consul stationed in Savannah, who expanded the estate and developed a model farm based on scientific agriculture. Major Theodore G. Barker, a Charleston lawyer and Confederate veteran, acquired the property in 1882, and through purchase and inheritance he became the largest landowner in Henderson County; it was he who first named the estate Brookland. Barker made numerous changes to the house, including the various Colonial Revival embellishments and application of pebbledash to the exterior walls. After Barker's death in 1917, Brookland became the property of Henry H. Ficken, a prominent Charleston lawyer who continued the traditional usage of Brookland as a summer home. Ficken's heirs subdivided the estate and sold off most of the parcels. In 1977, Hendersonville banker C. Eugene Staton and his wife, Deborah, bought the dwelling house and nearly ten acres of land. The Statons have made Brookland into a permanent year round residence.

Criteria Assessment:

A. Associated with the establishment and the continuity of the mountain resort community of Flat Rock, the first community of its type in western North Carolina and the herald of the region's subsequent development as a resort and vacation center.

B. Associated with the lives of several prominent individuals of Charleston and Savannah through the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

C. Embodies architectural elements reflecting the changing tastes and the continuity of use and improvement of a substantial nineteenth century summer house in western North Carolina, including features of the original late Federal/early Greek Revival house and later Colonial Revival alterations and embellishments. The handsome setting with landscaping and outbuildings embodies qualities of a nineteenth century mountain estate.

D. May be likely to yield information important in the study of the establishment and development of outsider-owned summer estates in western North Carolina, and the subsequent economic and social impacts of this phenomenon in the region.
As the first quarter of the nineteenth century drew to a close, pioneer life in the Blue Ridge Mountains was still in its childhood. Initial dangers and hardships of settlement had been conquered, and throughout the sparsely settled region stood homes of simple and practical construction. Subsistence farms dominated the rudimentary economy with the settlers purchasing no more than necessary for survival, often by barter in lieu of hard cash. A frontier lifestyle was everywhere evident.

In the mid 1820s, a group of Charleston businessmen, searching for transportation routes to link Charleston with the water routes to the west, passed through southern Buncombe County which later became the Flat Rock/Hendersonville area. They returned home with glowing reports of the salubrious climate, beauty, and tranquility of the North Carolina mountains. The "low country" people (residents along the coast from Charleston to Savannah), who had long endured the unhealthy "sickly seasons," had discovered an upland sanctuary—a vacation land and summer resort beyond "the flat rock on the blue ridge." Prominent Charlestonians, led by Charles Baring and Judge Mitchell King, began buying large tracts of land in the area. Smaller tracts Baring and King sold to other leading Charlestonians and low country planters. In time the settlement grew to around fifty large estates.

The low country people came not as permanent residents but largely as vacationers retreating from the hot, humid summers along the coast. They brought to the Blue Ridge a lifestyle alien to the frontier society of the mountains, a cultural phenomenon characterized by wealth and luxury. Summer homes reflected the grandeur of the Charleston elite; slaves performed the menial tasks; and the abundance of money afforded the newcomers the privilege of indulgence and gratification of passing fancies. The plantation setting was transposed to the mountains:

The main house was placed to face a delightful view of distant mountains. Long, quarter of a mile to a mile long entrance drives cut through the woods and usually ended in a carriage circle in front of the manor house. Formal gardens rich with boxwoods sloped over terraced hillsides. A separate kitchen building, servants houses, and supply buildings ranged back of the main dwelling, often resembling the plantation fieldhand "street."

Each May the low country people began the two week trek to their mountain homes where they remained until October, enjoying the best of antebellum Southern life. It was a closely knit society, one that came to be known as the "Little Charleston of the Mountains." It was this cultural climate that gave birth to Brookland, a manorial estate outwardly reflecting the characteristics of its parent society but with an internal history somewhat different.

The first low country owner of the land whereon Brookland now stands was Fredrick Rutledge of Hampton Plantation on the South Santee River near Charleston. Rutledge was well educated, and from his studies he had acquired considerable knowledge in law and medicine. His background, he felt, qualified him to be "legal counsel, doctor, and teacher for 'his people' at Hampton and the adjoining plantations." On October 29, 1829, Rutledge purchased 277 acres in Buncombe County whereon he built a log house. A few years earlier, he had married a distant relative, Henrietta Middleton Rutledge, and for several summers the family enjoyed their mountain retreat. The log home still stands near the Brookland manor house, but Rutledge and his wife preferred the fashionable
Historical Significance

Edmonston (1782-1861) immigrated to Charleston from the Shetland Islands in the early 1800s. He developed a number of business interests, including ownership of a prosperous wharf. From 1809 to 1841 Edmonston was a prominent figure in Charleston's economic and social circles. Within a year after he purchased the Buncombe County estate, Charles Edmonston erected the manor house now known as Brookland. For many years tradition alleged that the home was built by Edmund Molyneux, Edmonston's successor in ownership, but when the house was pebble-dashed in 1892, a board was uncovered with the inscription "Charles Edmonston, Architect, 1836." The inscription date coincides with Edmonston's known activity in the "Little Charleston of the Mountains." On August 27, 1836, Charles and Mary Edmonston were among the twenty charter members who signed a resolution of devotion to a new church, St. John in the Wilderness. The Episcopal edifice was consecrated the following day by Bishop Levi Silliman Ives. Thus, documentary evidence depicts Edmonston as the builder of Brookland despite the persistence of the Molyneux tradition.

Edmonston directed that his summer home be constructed from the heart of virgin timber. The lumber was sawed at the Oleetah Falls sash sawmill near the headwaters of Little Hungry River. A little less than 300 board feet of lumber were hauled by ox cart to the construction site each day, and accidents occurred from time to time. Obviously, considerable time passed before the home was completed. Since Edmonston was not a planter, few if any outbuildings were constructed during his ownership. The older Rutledge house probably met the needs of servants or a caretaker. On January 9, 1841, Edmonston conveyed the estate, "... together with the Dwelling House & improvements...." to Edmund Molyneux for $5,000.

Edmund Molyneux (1790-1864) was born in Liverpool and entered the British Foreign Service while still a young man. He was appointed a consul in 1831 and sent to Savannah, Georgia, where he maintained the official government residence until 1862. In addition to his consular duties, Molyneux became a successful merchant and traveled in the fashionable circles of Savannah and Charleston. On April 30, 1834, he married Eliza Herriott Johnston, daughter of a prominent Savannah family, and a year later a son, Edmund, was born.

Molyneux was the first owner of Brookland to treat the estate as a semi-permanent residence rather than merely a summer home. He renovated the house and grounds giving a distinctive English flavor to the estate. Molyneux's wealth enabled him to indulge in his hobby of amateur farming for which he spared no expense in the application of the latest scientific principles and best fertilizers. Proud of the fine crops produced on his mountain estate, the British consul did not hesitate to boast of his agricultural skills to his friends and neighbors. Nevertheless, Molyneux seems to have been well liked and very active in the "Little Charleston" community.

About the same time that he moved to his Henderson County farm, Molyneux began attendance at the Church of St. John in the Wilderness. On July 28, 1841, he became a member of the vestry even though he apparently did not become a communicant until 1848. He strongly supported the Episcopal faith, and when the decision to build Calvary Church at Fletcher was made, Molyneux's $1,000 contribution doubled the second largest donation.
From his hilltop home, Molyneux watched as the county surveyor, Charles de Choisy, laid out plats, streets, and avenues for a new town which in 1847 would be incorporated as Hendersonville. The county seat was laid out largely on the land donated by Judge Mitchell King whose property bordered Molyneux's estate. Because of its proximity to the town, the British Consul's summer home was sometimes designated as "at Hendersonville," but there is no evidence that he closely identified himself with the social life of the county seat.

From 1841 until 1862 Edmund Molyneux and his family spent the "sickly season," about six months (May-October), of each year at his home near Hendersonville. Despite his farming and landscaping interests, he could not neglect his duties as consul; consequently, he established an office in his home and kept regular communication with the British consulate in Savannah. As a foreign official who had acquired a taste for the Southern lifestyle, Molyneux found himself in an uncomfortable position when the Civil War began. In 1862 he returned to Europe, leaving his summer residence virtually abandoned. He died two years later and his property passed to his widow Eliza.

Eliza died in September, 1872, and her will bequeathed all real and personal property to the trustees of her estate to be equally divided among her children. Her son Edmund Molyneux and Henry Royds were named executors and trustees bearing the right to sell such property as deemed necessary, proper, and convenient. Legal complications in carrying out the will of Eliza Molyneux held up probate in Henderson County until 1882. Following a series of complicated legal maneuvers, Major Theodore G. Barker purchased the estate containing over 400 acres on June 2 of that year.

Barker was a Charleston lawyer and a Confederate veteran, having served as adjutant under General Wade Hampton. Although the manor house had been occupied for several summers by the James Rose family, the estate had fallen into a severe state of deterioration. Only the vineyard remained productive, and Uncle July, a former Molyneux servant, maintained a livelihood for many years after the war by harvesting the grapes for sale to local residents. Barker immediately began to restore the dwelling house for his summer home and worked to revitalize the farm. He purchased adjoining land, and though his wife's inheritance (Louisa Preston King Barker was the daughter of Judge Mitchell King), he amassed a tremendous acreage which made him the largest landowner in Henderson County. The process of restoration took ten years, culminating in the pebbledashing of the mansion in 1892. Barker constructed the first dairy barn in the county, one built with a concrete floor and stanchions. By importing purebred Devon cattle, he improved both the milk and beef production of local stock. The improved house and farm he called Brookland Manor.

Realizing the advantages of a railroad for himself and the community, Barker gave the railroad company the right of way for land stretching from East Flat Rock to Hendersonville. The favor was returned by the establishment of a flag station near the intersection of the main driveway and the tracks. Guests to Brookland Manor were very nearly dropped off at the door, making Barker's home an unofficial passenger depot.

Like his predecessor, Edmund Molyneux, Major Barker spent six months of each year at Brookland Manor, a pilgrimage made annually for nearly four decades. During the summer retreats, he entertained lavishly in the finest Charleston traditions.
Land Manor was also a working farm; numerous tenants and hired help manned the fields and a manager or caretaker was employed to oversee the operation in the off season. Barker continued to improve his dwelling house, making substantial changes just a few years before his death. The roofline was lifted to allow the installation of a water cistern in the attic. Brookland thus had a running water system before it was generally available in the county. Barker died in 1917 leaving a will that bequeathed all his property to his wife, Louisa P. Barker, but granting his executors the power to sell the estate as advisable.

W. Huger FitzSimons and W. B. W. Howe, executors of Barker's will, deemed it necessary to sell part of the estate to pay debts and inheritance taxes. On November 1, 1918, 161½ acres, including the dwelling house, were sold to Julia B. Ficken, wife of H. H. Ficken, a prominent Charleston banker and businessman. The Fickens also acquired much of the adjoining farm land, and during their ownership, a somewhat smaller estate functioned much as it had under Major Theodore G. Barker. Few structural changes were made, but Henry and Julia Ficken did alter the name of the estate, from Brookland Manor to Brookland House. Eventually, the name became simply Brookland.

After the deaths of Henry and Julia Ficken, the extensive estate was subdivided and sold by the heirs. Part became the present Barker Heights, a community named for the property's long time owner, Theodore G. Barker. In 1977, Mr. & Mrs. C. Eugene Staton, Jr., bought the dwelling house and 9.27 acres. Staton has a long family tie to the property. His grandfather, John F. McGraw, was the caretaker at one time; his grandmother, Jannie Lee Gurley, lived there in childhood; and Gene Staton's parents resided on the Brookland estate when their son was born. The Staton family currently resides at Brookland and is very interested in maintaining the historical integrity of the house.

The structures of course are closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structures. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archeological record. Therefore, archeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structures. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.


4 Marsh, Historic Flat Rock, 7; Patton, Little Charleston, preface, 21; and Memminger, Historical Sketch of Flat Rock; and Marsh, Historic Flat Rock, 11-15.

5 Ray, Postmarks, 86; Marsh, Historic Flat Rock, 7; Patton, Little Charleston, preface; and Memminger, Historical Sketch of Flat Rock, 11-13.


7 Patton, Little Charleston, 14; Memminger, Historical Sketch of Flat Rock, 10; and Wheeler and Neblett, Chosen Exile, 80. See also Susan L. Allston, Early Sketch of St. John in the Wilderness and Flat Rock, North Carolina (n.p., 1964), 19, hereinafter cited as Allston, Early Sketch.

8 Buncombe County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Buncombe County Courthouse, Asheville, Deed Book 20, pp. 203-204.

9 Journal of a Secesh Lady: The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmonston, 1860-1866, edited by Beth Gilbert Crabtree and James W. Patton (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1979), xiii. For a photograph of Edmonston's Charleston home, see page 75.

10 The board is now in the possession of Gene Staton, the present owner of Brooklands. Researcher's interview with Gene Staton, August 13, 1981. See also Frank L. FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha (Hendersonville: Golden Glow Publishing Company, 3 vols. 1975-1979), III, 117, hereinafter cited as FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha.

12 FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha, III, 115, 117.

13 Copy of original deed now in possession of Gene Staton, owner of Brookland, was loaned to researcher for use in compiling this report.


15 FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha, III, 115; Patton, Little Charleston, 55; Marsh, Historic Flat Rock, 45; and Memminger, Historical Sketch of Flat Rock, 20.


18 Fain, Henderson County, 18. For references to the Molyneux home "at Hendersonville," see Allan Fullarton, vice-consul to Georgia, declaration to E. U. Archibald, British Consul in New York, September 9, 1865, Papers of the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, hereinafter cited as Fullarton declaration. Other than his church activities, Molyneux appears to have limited his involvement to the "Little Charleston" community. He was one of the ten initial stockholders involved in the construction of the Farmer Hotel in 1850. The hotel's name was later changed to the Woodfield Inn. See Ray, Postmarks, 125.

19 See Fullarton declaration.

20 The will is dated September 17, 1864. It was not probated in Henderson County until 1882 when Theodore G. Barker cleared title to the property. Henderson County Will Books, Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Henderson County Courthouse, Hendersonville, Will Book 1, p. 194, hereinafter cited as Henderson County Will Book.

21 Henderson County Will Book 1, p. 207. Copies of all the legal transactions involving the Molyneux estate and the clearance of title to T. G. Barker and later to Julia Ficken
(continued) are in the possession of Gene Staton, current owner of Brookland. They were borrowed by the researcher for use in compiling this report and are hereinafter cited as Brookland papers.


Fain, Henderson County, 22; FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha, II, 72; and Patton, Henderson Story, 187.

Patton, Little Charleston, 55; and Memminger, Historical Sketch of Flat Rock, 26.

Brookland papers; Patton, Henderson Story, 205; and FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha, III, 117-118.

FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha, III, 117-118; and Brookland Papers.

FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha, III, 118. See also Barker vs. Southern Railway Company, Henderson County Superior Court Records, Civil Action Docket, Case No. 6, 103.

FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha, III, 118.

Researcher's interview with Gene Staton, current owner of Brookland, August 7, 1981. For old photograph made before the roofline alteration, see Flat Rock, North Carolina: A Sketch of the Past (n.p., 1908), 8.

Barker's will was dated May 11, 1910. Henderson County Will Book 5, p. 116.

Henderson County Deed Book 97, folio 254. See also FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha, III, 118.

Brookland papers.

FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha, III, 118; and Ray, Postmarks, 124.

Staton interview, August 7, 1981. See also plat of Survey for C. E. Staton, Jr., prepared by Jon H. Laughter, June, 1977. Plat in possession of Gene Staton.

FitzSimons, From the Banks of the Oklawaha, III, 119.
9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property  \[9.5 \text{ acres}\]

Quadrangle name: Hendersonville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The property included in this nomination is shown on the enclosed map "Survey for C.E. Staton, Jr. prepared by Jon H. Laughter" and encompasses all the land still immediately associated with the house.

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

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11. Form Prepared By

| name/title          | Michael T. Southern, Survey Specialist  
| Survey Specialist  | Jerry L. Cross, Researcher  
| Survey & Planning Branch |
| organization        | Archeology & Historic Preservation Section |
| date                | September, 1981 |
| street & number     | Division of Archives & History  
| 109 East Jones Street |
| telephone           | (919) 733-6545 |
| city or town        | Raleigh  
| state               | North Carolina |
| code                | 27611 |

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

X 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

For HCRS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration


Brookland papers. Legal actions in regard to the settlement of Edmund Molyneux's estate and title clearance for Theodore C. Barker and Julia Ficken. In possession of C. Eugene Staton.


Henderson County Records
   Deeds
   Superior Court Records
   Wills


Brookland
SR 1863 (Balsam Road)
Flat Rock/Hendersonville vicinity
Henderson County, N.C.
Hendersonville, N.C. Quadrangle
Scale 1:24000
9.5 acres
Zone 17 Easting 368240
Northing 3907380