

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Mary Mills Coxe House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 1210 Greenville Highway  N/A  not for publication

city or town Hendersonville  vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Henderson code 089 zip code 28792

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William S. Rain, Jr. 7-18-94  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL REVIVAL

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/granite  
walls STUCCO  
roof METAL  
other ASPHALT

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

ca. 1911

Significant Dates

ca. 1911

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.4 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	3 6 8 0 4 0	3 9 0 6 7 8 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Langdon E. Oppermann, Preservation Planner

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date April 1994

street & number 1500 Overbrook Ave telephone 910/721-1949

city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27104

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Henderson County, NC

## Narrative Description

Located in a fast-developing area just south of Hendersonville, North Carolina, the Mary Mills Coxe House sits on a 1.8-acre tract with wooded edges. It faces west across a shaded lawn towards the Greenville Highway, formerly known as the Flat Rock Road.<sup>1</sup> The property is bordered on the north and south by other residential properties, some on wooded lots. Behind the property, to the east, is a partially-wooded trailer park. Across the Greenville Highway are mid- and late-twentieth century commercial properties. An asphalt-and-gravel driveway enters the property north of the house, continues deep into the lot, and circles around to reach the porte cochere. At the rear of the property is a carriage house contemporary to the house but altered unsympathetically, and two later, non-contributing buildings. A low, curving granite wall forms a front entrance to the property from the road, which, at the time the house was built, was a gravel road with banks on each side and a dirt path atop each bank.<sup>2</sup> Built ca. 1911 as a single family residence, the Mary Mills Coxe House is notable as one of only a handful of pebbledash houses remaining in Henderson County.

## 1. Mary Mills Coxe House

(Contributing Building)

ca. 1911

The house itself is a two-and-one-half-story, frame, Colonial Revival-style dwelling set on a raised basement and stuccoed with pebbledash siding. Pebbledash was made popular in the area by Richard S. Smith who came to Asheville with Richard Morris Hunt to supervise construction of Biltmore House. Pebbledash is a rough-textured stucco, an architectural concrete aggregate called "roughcast" by architect Smith.<sup>3</sup> The house is three bays wide with a two-level side-gabled roof, a pedimented front dormer, and a rear gable ell. The roof is sheathed in pressed metal shingles and pierced by three interior brick chimneys. Pent roofs characteristic of the Colonial Revival style are applied directly to the walls of all gable ends, enclosing the gables. Deep overhanging boxed eaves with beaded-board soffits and frieze are on all sides of the house. At the front (west), a one-story hip-roofed porch wraps on the south side and extends to the north to create a porte cochere. The high foundation is of rough cut, regular coursed granite that matches the wide front granite steps and the steps leading from the north end of the porch beneath the porte cochere. It is similar to the granite of the low front entrance wall.

The house has little decorative detailing, with the emphasis of the front (west) facade on the porch and central entrance. The large porch is formed by fifteen columns with simple Doric caps and bases supporting an unadorned entablature and asphalt hipped roof. The ceiling is of beaded boards. The wide overhangs of the main roof are repeated beneath the porch roof. A wood wheelchair ramp, sympathetically designed to reflect the square picket balustrade of the porch, was added to the south side porch elevation in 1993, and rotted column bases were replaced in kind.

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<sup>1</sup> Early twentieth-century deeds.

<sup>2</sup> Interview, Louise Bailey.

<sup>3</sup> Hooper, nomination for Alexander Cottage.

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The three-bay front elevation is symmetrically balanced, with a central doorway and paired nine-over-one windows on the first level. The front door with beveled glass is set within a broad, three-part molded frame. Four-light sidelights above paired panels and a three-part transom with eight small lights complete the composition of the central entrance. The top of the transom and of the front windows abut the crown mold of the porch. Typical of the Colonial Revival style, the second-story fenestration is of similar but smaller paired windows in all three bays.

The side elevations of the house have paired nine-over-one windows at the frontmost bays and single nine-over-one windows at the rear bays at both levels. A flared-roof bay window projects on the north side just behind the porte cochere, and another near the back of the south elevation projects onto the wrap porch. The north side elevation of the rear ell has nine-over-one single windows at both levels. In the attic level, the original nine-light fixed sash in the front dormer windows and side and rear gable windows were replaced in 1993 with single-pane sash. The sills of the attic windows rest on the ridge line of the pent roofs, while the second-floor windows seem to hang from just beneath the frieze, and those on the front and south side elevations rest on the porch rooftop. At the rear (east) elevation at basement level are two six-over-six windows, replaced in 1993 to match the originals, and a doorway beneath the back porch.

Across the rear of the house is a two-story shed-roofed porch with enclosed upper-level sleeping porch protruding from just beneath the pent roof of the rear ell. Of odd configuration, it appears originally to have been a one-story porch. The porch is supported by granite piers similar to the roughcut granite of the foundation, with lattice screening and a new wooden stair built in 1993 to replace what was then existing. At the first floor level, four square posts support a plain wide frieze. Decorative sawn purlins are exposed on each side. The second story extends beyond the first floor on all sides, supported by three sawn curved brackets more closely resembling false knee braces and similar to the purlin ends. Two slender square wood posts provide additional support at the protruding corners. This early alteration created an enlarged upper porch level that was converted into a sleeping porch with vertical beaded-board wainscot and a ribbon of six-light windows on all three sides.<sup>4</sup> The single-hung sashes open down into the wainscot. During the renovations of 1993, pebbledash siding matching that of the exterior was found on the rear wall of the house at the second-floor porch level. A center partition was removed and the eight-inch floor incline typical of porches was made level. In addition, the rear eaves of the porch were reduced from about a three-foot overhang to a two-foot overhang.

### Interior

The interior of the Coxe House follows a modified center hall plan. Rising along the rear wall of the hall is an open string stair with a gracefully curved, rounded oval handrail and turned and tapered Colonial Revival balusters. The stair turns at a lighted landing before rising to the second floor. The newel is a composite of a turned central baluster, more Victorian in nature, ringed with the more delicate turned balusters of the balustrade. Beneath this stair is a panelled closet door. Immediately behind the front staircase is a small stairhall with two sets of enclosed back steps, one leading down to the basement and the other, the servants' stair to the second floor and attic.

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<sup>4</sup> Muntins of these sash are similar to but narrower than those of the original sashes elsewhere in the house, and the beaded board used here is wider than the original.

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Access from the wide central hall to each of the front formal rooms is through tall pocket doorways. On the north side is the dining room with its bay window and, behind it, the pantry and kitchen. A later bathroom built into part of the pantry opens into the hall behind the dining room. On the south side are the large living room and smaller library with bay window.

The first floor rooms and hallway have fairly simple door surrounds typical of the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> In the hallway, stairway, and three formal rooms of the first floor is a wainscot of recessed vertical panels with inverse molded trim. Windows exhibit the same surround as the doors, with the wainscot continuing as a low row of panels beneath the sills. All doors on the first floor have six recessed horizontal panels on both sides with the exception of the taller, seven-panel pocket doors. Fairly simple Colonial Revival mantelpieces are found in the three formal rooms, the most decorative are in the two front rooms. The picture rails are original. A servant buzzer system, no longer operable, was wired throughout the house. The built-in desk and bookshelves in the library are later additions.

On the second floor the hall opens onto three front bedrooms, a smaller back bedroom, and the servants' stairhall which in turn leads to the sleeping porch. Door surrounds, doors, and picture rails are similar to those on the first floor. The panelled wainscot of the lower level is replaced here by tall baseboards with simple top molding. Mantelpieces in the front corner rooms are of Colonial Revival style with slender fluted classical columns on plinth blocks.

The interior of the house is a coherent whole and retains to a remarkable degree its floorplan, mantels, woodwork, hardwood floors and plaster walls on both levels. The 1993 renovation modified bathroom and service areas, but retained original decorative elements and structural material. Beneath the house is a full basement with earth floor and freestanding supporting beams.

**2. Carriage House (Non-contributing Building) ca. 1911**

Behind the house and facing north is a carriage house that appears to be contemporary to the main house.<sup>6</sup> It is a one-and-one-half-story building of the same pebbledash as the house, with front-gabled asphalt roof and later attached cinder block sheds. The return cornice at both gable ends are similar in design to the pent roofs of the main house. In each upper gable end is a two-over-two window, and there is a two-over-two window on first floor rear. Their surrounds and those of the door are identical to the surrounds of the main house, and it was not unusual for a subsidiary building to receive less up-to-date sash. Historical integrity of the carriage house has been damaged by the removal of the original carriage doors and replacement with ca. 1950s louvered glass windows and the two side additions, one of which is a shed-roofed garage. The building has been used most recently as an apartment.

<sup>5</sup> Only the surround from the hall to the later first-floor bathroom is different. It is the same width as the originals but with a different trim profile.

<sup>6</sup> Current tax records give a construction date of 1900. The 1911 date is more likely.

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Associated buildings outside the nominated area

Two other buildings on the property are later and of a non-contributing nature; thus, they have been excluded from the nominated parcel. These are:

a. Apartment ca. 1955

Just west of the carriage house (2) is a small one-story, shed-roofed house sheathed in circular-sawn board-and-batten siding and dating from the mid-twentieth century. The paired centrally-placed entry doors in the main (north) elevation are paneled wood with multi-paned lights. Windows are horizontal-paned; the roof is of 5V metal. At the front is a concrete stoop with low metal railing.

b. Art Studio ca. 1955

North of the carriage house (2) and apartment (a) is a large vertical-board building of unusual plan. The main body of the four-part building is frame with an asymmetrical gable roof, perhaps best described as a shed roof dropping off to the north as a Mansard pierced with four unadorned square window openings. Attached at the front gable end is a four-bay shed entrance wing with overhanging eaves. Near the back of the north side elevation is a steep shed-roofed wing with its upper north wall entirely of glass, providing ample light to the studio space within. The rear (east) elevation of the building is a sawtooth design, again with significant window exposure on the north allowing light into smaller studio spaces. Traditional detailing is absent. The overall effect is of bold diagonals, counterpointed shapes, and multiple massing. The studio is believed to have been built in the mid- to late 1950s by Colonel James P. Wharton.<sup>7</sup> He established the Flat Rock School of Art in the building and offered art classes and demonstrations during the warm months. Two art instructors who came here each summer to teach were Elliott O'Hara, a well-known watercolorist, and Vicki Gorri, both from Florida.<sup>8</sup>

Despite numerous owners, the Coxe House is remarkably intact. The overall integrity of both the exterior and interior of the building has been maintained by the retention of form and ornamentation and by sensitive renovation for its current use. The non-contributing carriage house and the two later buildings are located at the rear of the house and do not detract from the overall setting, feeling and association of the house.

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<sup>7</sup> J.B. Wharton bought the property in 1920 and transferred all or a part of it to his son Col. J.P. Wharton in 1955.

<sup>8</sup> Interviews, Ellen Hobbs and Dorothy Wharton.

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

Significant as one of the few remaining pebbledash houses in Henderson County, the Mary Mills Coxe House and most of its 1.8-acre lot meet National Register criterion C for architectural significance. Today, pebbledash houses are only infrequently found in Henderson County. This uncommon house type was made popular by prolific Biltmore Village architect Richard Sharp Smith through his widespread practice in the mountains of North Carolina, beginning in 1896. The Coxe House is believed to be one of only about ten pebbledash houses remaining in Henderson County, and it is a rare, unchanged example.<sup>9</sup> Both the interior and exterior of the Coxe House are remarkably intact and today are in excellent condition. The house was built ca. 1911 by Mary Mills Coxe, the widow of Colonel Franklin Coxe, noted Asheville developer and millionaire. The property is the same tract initially purchased by Mrs. Coxe in 1907, and, with the exception of two 1950s buildings at the rear of the tract, retains integrity of setting on the Greenville Highway although development has changed the earlier wooded character of neighboring properties across the road and to the rear. In 1993 and 1994 the current owners undertook a sympathetic renovation of the house for its current use as offices and showcase for a construction and development firm.

Architecture Context

Richard Sharp Smith was an English architect who had joined the New York architectural firm of Hunt and Hunt in the 1870s. He came to Asheville in 1889 to execute Richard Morris Hunt's design for the Biltmore House. When Biltmore was completed in 1896 after Hunt's death, Smith remained in Asheville and began a widespread and prolific practice in the western counties of North Carolina.<sup>10</sup> Hunt and Smith both used pebbledash in the 1890s in numerous buildings in Biltmore Village and elsewhere in Asheville. Thus Hunt is credited with bringing the pebbledash concept to this area, although it was Richard S. Smith who popularized it through his far-reaching practice. He was the architect for residential, commercial, governmental, religious and educational buildings throughout this area of the mountains, including Buncombe, Henderson, Jackson, Madison, Polk, and Transylvania counties. There are believed to be no pebbledash structures in the area which predate the influence of Hunt and Smith.<sup>11</sup> It is thus reasonable to credit these men, especially Smith, with the increased popularity and usage of pebbledash, and to recognize R.S. Smith's influence on the design of the Coxe House, although there is no indication he designed the house. The fairly extensive index of Smith drawings at the Asheville-Buncombe Historic Resources Commission contains no record of this house.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Survey information from Carolyn Humphries, Western Office, Dept. of Archives & History.

<sup>10</sup> Hooper, nomination for Alexander Cottage, and Bishir, NC Architecture, pp. 386, 486 (note 104).

<sup>11</sup> Interviews, Martha Fullington, John Horton, and others.

<sup>12</sup> Interview, Maggie O'Conner. Smith designed the Henderson County courthouse and a number of other buildings in Hendersonville and Flat Rock. His drawings are also shown in his 1901 My Sketch Book. Not far from the Coxe House, Major Barker added pebbledash siding to the scored frame siding of his 1841 Brookland Manor; there is no record that Smith was involved.

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Henderson County, NCHistorical Background

Major Theodore G. Barker, a Charleston lawyer, bought Brookland Manor in Henderson County, with its 1841 summer house, in 1882. Barker acquired land throughout the 1880s and 1890s, including land his wife had inherited, until they became some of the largest land owners in Henderson County. During the same period he and his wife, Louisa Preston Barker, sold many parcels as well.<sup>13</sup> Years before his death in 1917 they had sold off their Flat Rock Road frontage as individual parcels, including the 1907 sale to Mary Mills Coxe, widow of Colonel Franklin Coxe.<sup>14</sup>

The architecture and interior decorative features of the Coxe House clearly point to a construction date during Mrs. Coxe's ownership, and county tax records corroborate, showing a 1911 date. Colonel Franklin Coxe, who died four years before his widow bought this land, was credited with the late-nineteenth century boom in Asheville. Asheville, about 25 miles north of Hendersonville in Buncombe County, had seen explosive growth in the 1880s in large part due to the efforts of Colonel Coxe. Coxe had been president of the Commercial National Bank in Charlotte and in 1881 became vice president of the Western Carolina Railroad, the pioneer railroad company of the mountains. He contributed private funds to construction of the railroad to Asheville in 1885.<sup>15</sup>

Coxe invested heavily in western North Carolina real estate. He built Asheville's Battery Park Hotel, "the first modern hotel in the state," which opened in 1886.<sup>16</sup> It is said it was from this hotel that George Washington Vanderbilt saw the Pisgah Mountains and decided to build his Biltmore Estate. A decade after Coxe's death the Asheville newspaper reported that

"...he had come to Asheville when it was a little town unknown to the world and with confidence and judgment which inspired others built the Battery Park Hotel and in doing this and by his influence and energy had given Asheville an impetus to its career of progress and advertised it far and wide as the premier health resort."<sup>17</sup>

Coxe owned timber lands in North Carolina and anthracite coal mines in Pennsylvania. He had property in Knoxville and in the Okefenokee Swamp.<sup>18</sup> He was elected president of the Charleston, Cincinnati and Chicago Railroad. He acquired large tracts of land in the Montford section of Asheville and made heavy investment elsewhere in western North Carolina and, the Asheville Citizen reported, "all of them were profitable."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Henderson County Grantor Index shows that the Barkers, and his estate after his 1917 death, sold about 175 parcels between 1884 and 1946. Louisa Barker was the daughter of Judge Mitchell King.

<sup>14</sup> A detailed plat drawn in 1918 by George Kershaw shows the Flat Rock Road parcels, the 161-acre Brookland Manor tract, as well as lands still held at that time by the Barker Estate. The Brookland Manor tract included the entrance parcel (today's Balsam Road) fronting on Flat Rock Road.

<sup>15</sup> Asheville Citizen, 6/3/1903.

<sup>16</sup> Nomination of Green River Plantation House, and Asheville Citizen, 11/28/1914.

<sup>17</sup> Citizen, 6/3/1903.

<sup>18</sup> UNC-Asheville Special Collections and interview with John Toms, archivist.

<sup>19</sup> Citizen, 6/3/1903 and 11/28/1914.

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At his death in 1903 it was reported that "Col. Coxe's estate is estimated at seven millions."<sup>20</sup> It is therefore unclear why Mrs. Coxe, four years after his death, would buy a less-than-two-acre tract of land in Henderson County and build a residence there. Fairly extensive investigation into Coxe family history has produced no leads. Despite oral tradition that Colonel Coxe left their home at Green River Plantation to their daughter Maude, he in fact left the 500-acre plantation near Rutherfordton to his wife.<sup>21</sup> This was the home of Mary Mills Coxe's ancestors and a place of her childhood. It appears from newspaper reports that Mrs. Coxe lived there most of the year. In 1906 she was reported as residing there, and her 1914 obituary stated, "Following the death of Colonel Coxe, Mrs. Coxe made her residence at the family plantation although she was a frequent visitor to Asheville and spent several months of each year at this city."<sup>22</sup> There is no mention of Henderson County. Mrs. Coxe also had at least one house in Philadelphia, a house in Rutherfordton, and perhaps a house in Asheville, as well as money at her disposal.<sup>23</sup>

Among the numerous people interviewed for this nomination were few who knew any early history of the Coxe House. According to a 95-year-old lifelong resident of this area, the Coxes built the house but never lived there. Other residents and two Coxe family members, including Mrs. Coxe's daughter-in-law who married into the family in 1923 after the house had been sold, remember hearing that the house had been built by the Coxes, but they know nothing about it.<sup>24</sup> Because some family members remember hearing the name Barker, it is possible the Barkers and Coxes, both wealthy landowners in the region, were associated. Nothing else is known.<sup>25</sup> The Coxes owned the property only ten years. Mrs. Coxe died late in 1914 and her five children sold the house in 1917.<sup>26</sup> The house was bought in 1920 by the Wharton family who held it for 43 years until 1963. The house was known as "Gray Gables" during the Whartons' ownership, though it is not known whether the name originated with the Coxes or the Whartons.<sup>27</sup> James B. Wharton was a merchant from Greenwood, S.C., who first summered here and later moved to this house year-round after his

<sup>20</sup> Asheville Citizen, 6/3/1903.

<sup>21</sup> Colonel Franklin Coxe's will states that it was upon her death that the plantation would pass to "Miss Maude," their unmarried daughter (pp. 9-10). The nomination for Green River Plantation, Polk County, is in error on this point. A copy of Col. Coxe's will is in the survey file for the Henderson County Coxe House.

<sup>22</sup> Asheville Citizen, 1906 obituary of her son, also 11/28/1914.

<sup>23</sup> Franklin Coxe will.

<sup>24</sup> Interviews, Willic Lou Jordan, Frances Huger Coxe (Mrs. Tench Coxe), Frances Coxe Humphries, C.E. Staton, and others.

<sup>25</sup> (1) Three of Col. Coxe's children were named as his executors. However, one died in 1906 and was replaced in April, 1907, as executor by John Mills of Rutherfordton, a relative of Mary Mills Coxe and perhaps her brother. It was about 6 months later that Mrs. Coxe bought the Henderson County land. No connection between these two events has been determined. (2) One person interviewed thought that the Coxes had built this house and the house immediately to the south (today's #1212). Deed research confirms the Coxes never owned the neighboring tract. Perhaps the confusion stems from a 1918 plat showing the Coxe tract grouped with the other and shown as one large Whitaker tract. Whitaker owned the Coxe tract from 1917 to 1920, and was the only owner to own both tracts, which he held together for less than a year. It was during this 11-month period, however, that George Kershaw's 1918 plat of T. G. Barker's estate was drawn.

<sup>26</sup> Only the first page and signature page of Mrs. Coxe's will are recorded in the Polk County Will Book. This confirms family tradition that a page or pages of her will were missing. The remaining page includes no reference to the Henderson County property. Because all of her children sold the property, it is reasonable to assume that they inherited equal shares. There is no record of the will in Henderson County despite her having owned property there at the time of her death.

<sup>27</sup> Interview, Dorothy Wharton, who remembers the house being called by this name. The name is also used in J.B. Wharton's obituary.

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retirement. A live-in maid occupied the third floor, and for a time his daughter, Floride Hood, lived with him. J.B. Wharton lived to be over 100 years old.<sup>28</sup> The carriage house, also pebbledash and contemporary to the house, was altered unsympathetically in the 1950s to create a garage and apartment. Also in the 1950s, Colonel James P. Wharton, J.B. Wharton's son, built two buildings on the back of the tract, one a small apartment, the other an art studio which housed the Flat Rock School of Art during the warm months. Col. Wharton was chairman of the art department of the University of Maryland for many years, and spent his summers here while he ran the art school.<sup>29</sup> After changing ownership four or five times, the property was purchased in 1993 by Flat Rock Limited Partnership, a construction and development firm. These current owners are attentive to the architectural significance of the house and are taking efforts to maintain and repair its structural and decorative elements. The property serves as their offices and renovation showcase.

The period during which the Coxe House gained its primary significance is the year ca. 1911 when Mrs. Coxe is believed to have had the pebbledash house built. This complies with the National Register guideline for properties nominated under Criterion C. The house retains high integrity from this period. This is a rare, unchanged example of a pebbledash house that has not been modernized stylistically. The architectural survey of Henderson County conducted in 1979, though not exhaustive, indicates that the Coxe House is one of the more well-preserved examples of perhaps only ten remaining pebbledash houses, which are becoming increasingly rare. Boundaries of the eligible property include all that portion of the 1.8-acre tract that corresponds to the one-and-three-quarter-acre tract purchased by Mrs. Coxe in 1907, with the exception of the back portion containing the late 1950s buildings, and which remains with the house today.

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<sup>28</sup> Interview, Dorothy Wharton.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

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Agreement regarding replacement of executor for Col. Coxe estate, 4/20/1907, in UNC-Asheville Special Collections.

The Asheville Citizen, 6/3/1903 (Col. Franklin Coxe obituary, p. 8).

The Asheville Citizen, 1906 (obituary of Francis Coxe, son of Mary Mills Coxe), in UNC-Asheville Special Collections.

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Will of Col. Franklin Coxe, Polk Co. Will Book 1, p. 392.

Will of Mary Mills Coxe (only partial will exists), Polk Co. Will Book 2, p. 270

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Continuation SheetSection number 9 Page 11Mary Mills Coxe House  
Henderson County, NCInterviews

Louise Bailey, lifelong resident of southern Hendersonville and Flat Rock, newspaper columnist for the Hendersonville Times-News, and co-author of Hendersonville and Henderson County: A Pictorial History.

A. F. (Unc) Barber, Jr., lifelong resident of the area.

Ellen Clayton Cantrell, current owner of Green River Plantation House.

Frances Huger Coxe, Black Mountain resident, daughter-in-law of Colonel Franklin and Mary Mills Coxe now in her 90s. Interview conducted by her daughter Kitty Coxe Page.

Tench Coxe, Atlanta resident, grandson of Colonel Franklin and Mary Mills Coxe.

Frances R. Edmunds, lifelong summer resident of Flat Rock.

Allan Freeman, lifelong resident of the area.

Martha Walker Fullington, architectural historian, Archives & History western office.

Eleanor Memminger Gorham, lifelong resident of Flat Rock.

Shirley Coxe Hazelhurst, Asheville resident, granddaughter of Colonel Franklin and Mary Mills Coxe.

Julia Hensley, Rutherfordton resident who assisted with research on Green River Plantation.

Ellen Hobbs, Hendersonville resident, former student at Flat Rock School of the Arts.

John Horton, former resident of Flat Rock, currently with Archives & History western office.

Frances Coxe Humphries, Asheville resident, granddaughter of Colonel Franklin and Mary Mills Coxe.

Willie Lou Jordan, telephone interview by Nancy Snowden (staff, Henderson County Public Library genealogical research room) conducted in my presence. Mrs. Jordan is a lifelong resident of Henderson County now in her mid-90s.

Betty Andrews Lee, lifelong resident of Flat Rock.

Rob Neufeld, Head of Branch Services, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, and currently researching history of the Coxe Family.

Maggie O'Conner, Executive Director, Asheville-Buncombe Historic Resources Commission, Asheville.

Kitty Coxe Page, Columbus resident (Polk County), granddaughter of Colonel Franklin and Mary Mills Coxe.

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Mary Mills Coxe House  
Henderson County, NC

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Gene Staton, current owner of Brookland Manor and lifelong resident of the area.

John Toms, curator, UNC-Asheville Special Collections, Ramsey Library.

Jean Wavrovics, owner and occupant of the Coxe House from 1973 to 1981. Her husband and a previous wife had moved into the house in 1967. The Wavrovics currently live in Palm City, Florida.

Harry Weiss, Executive Director, Asheville-Buncombe Preservation Society.

Dorothy Wharton, daughter-in-law of Col. James P. Wharton.

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Henderson County, NC

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### Verbal Boundary Description

The property being nominated consists of a portion of the 1.815-acre tract identified in Henderson County tax records as property 009578015063. It is shown on Map 9578.17, block 01, parcel 5063, Henderson County, N.C. The boundary of the nominated property is illustrated by the heavy black line on the accompanying tax map (scale of 1" = 100'), and on the accompanying survey map of larger scale. The north, west and south boundaries follow the current property line. The eastern boundary excludes the 1950s buildings from the nominated area.

### Boundary Justification

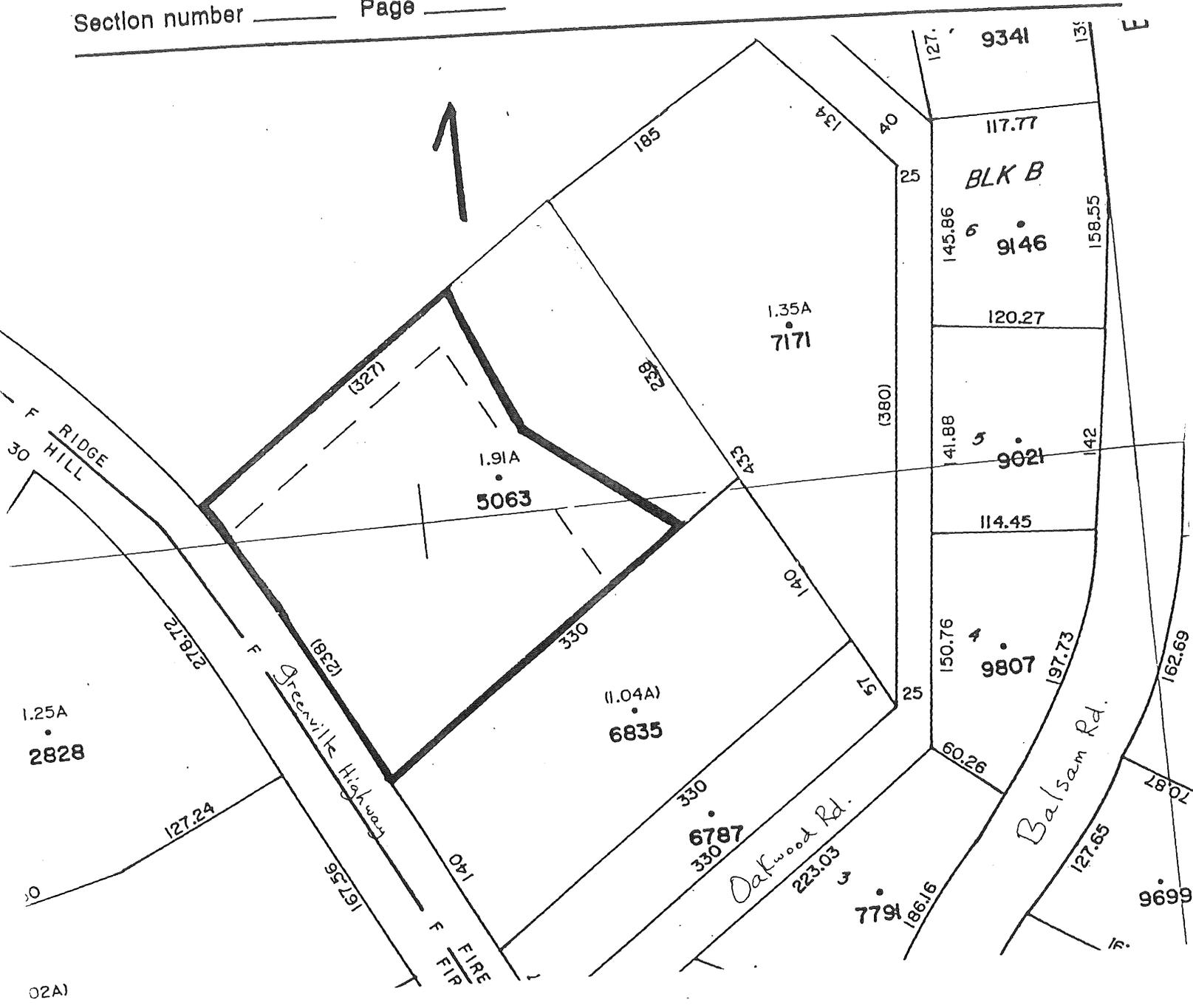
The property described includes a large portion of that tract historically associated with the Coxe House and which forms an appropriate setting for the house. The pebbledash carriage house, although non-contributing because of unsympathetic alterations, is included in the nominated parcel. The two 1950s buildings at the back of the tract are not within the nominated area. The nominated area retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association.

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Mary Mills Coxe House  
Henderson County, NC

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Mary Mills Coxe House  
1210 Greenville Highway  
Hendersonville vicinity, Henderson County, NC

Henderson County Tax Map 009578015063  
portion of 1.815-acre tract  
scale 1" = 100'

# Survey Map

Mary Mills Coxe House  
 1210 Greenville Highway  
 Hendersonville vicinity, Henderson County, NC  
 nominated parcel = a portion of 1.815-acre tract

- 2 = resource number
- C = contributing resource
- NC = non-contributing resource
- ② = photo ID, location, and direction  
 (interior shots not depicted)

## Key to resources:

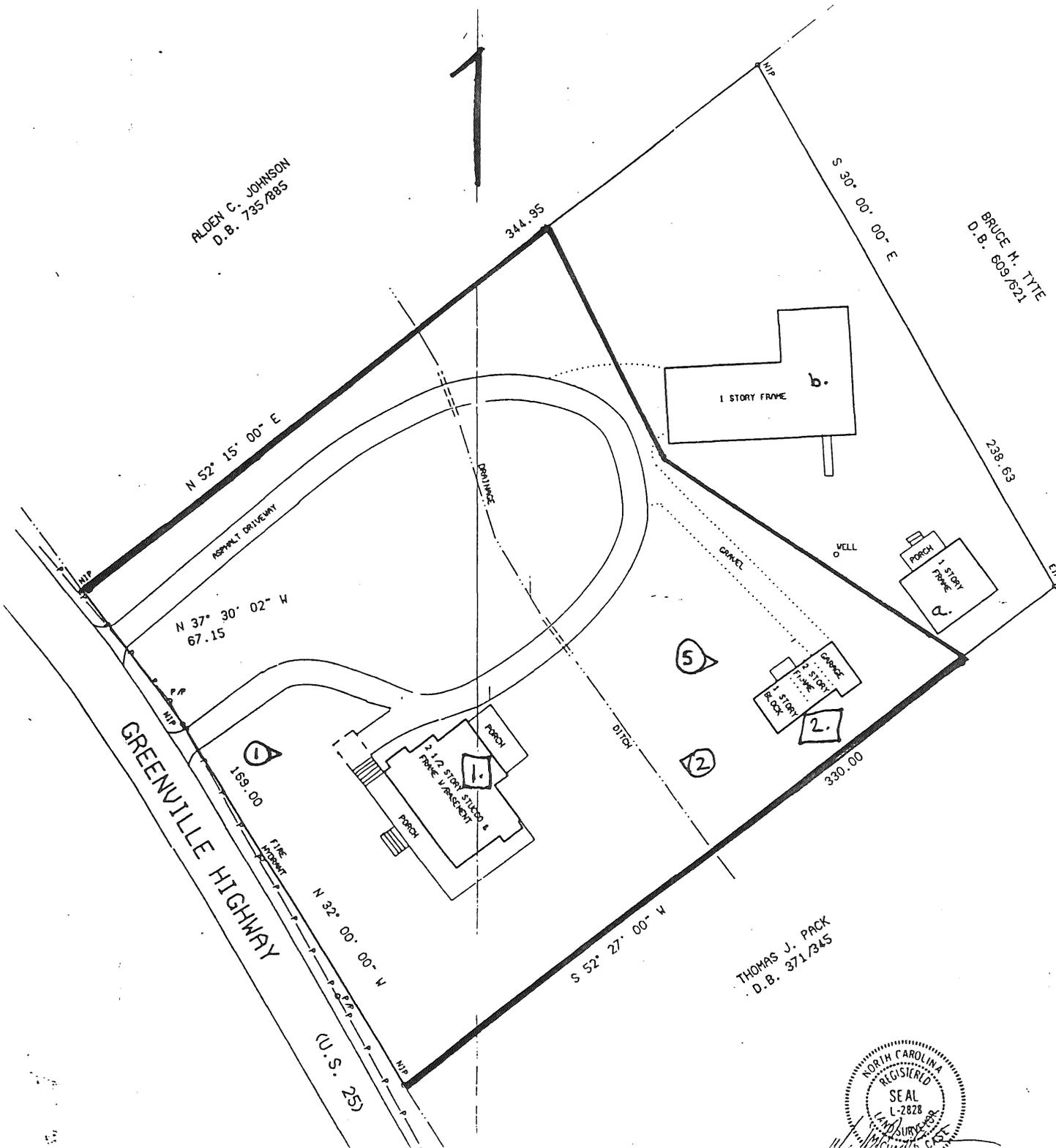
within nominated parcel:

- 1 House (C)
- 2 Carriage House (NC)

outside nominated parcel:

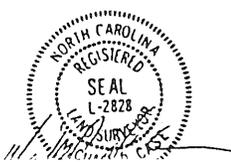
- a Apartment
- b Studio

prepared by Langdon E. Oppermann, 1994



1.815 ACRES

AREA BY COORDINATE COMPUTATION  
 NOT FOR RECORDATION



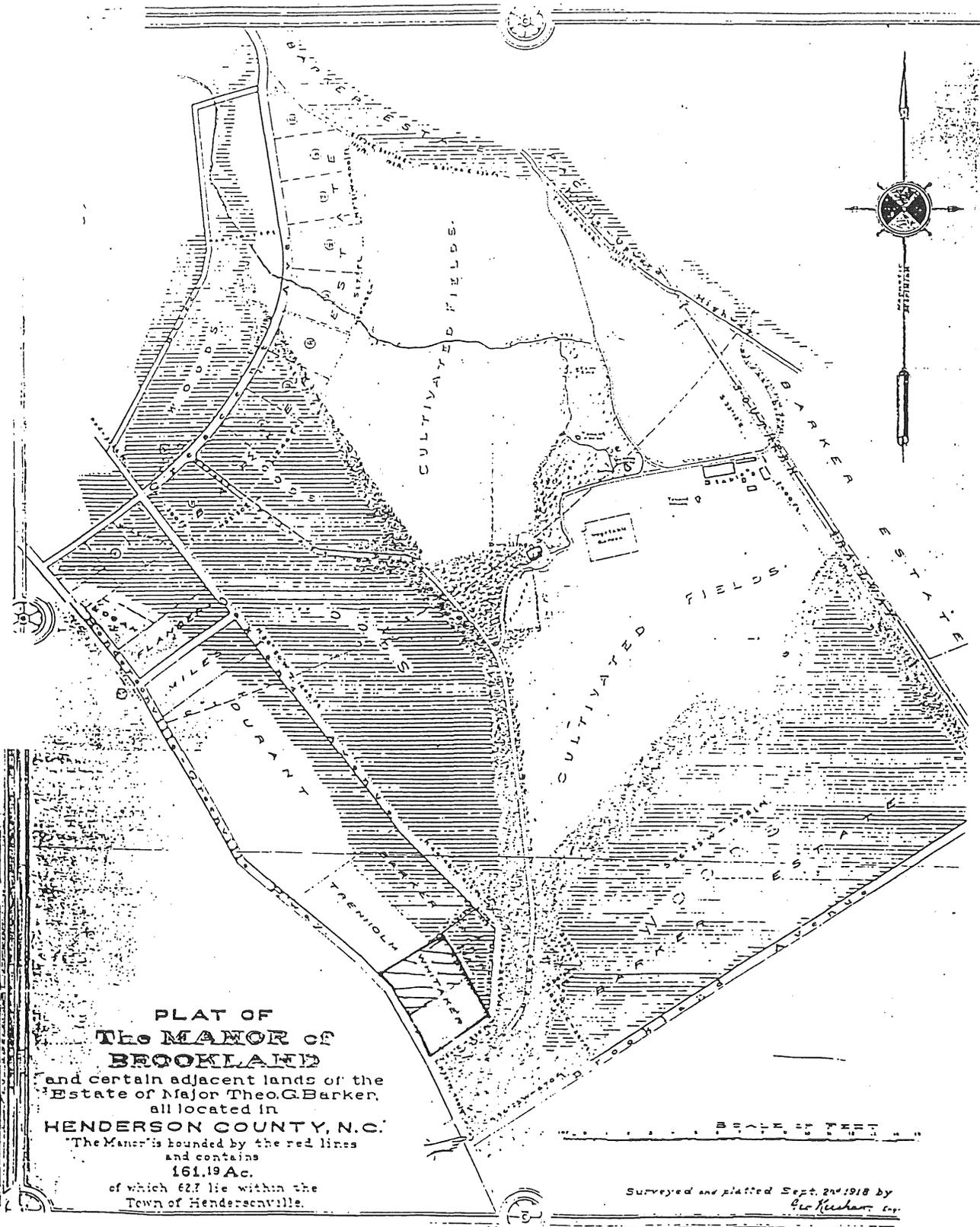
SURVEY FOR  
**DOUGLAS B. WYATT**

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Henderson County, NC

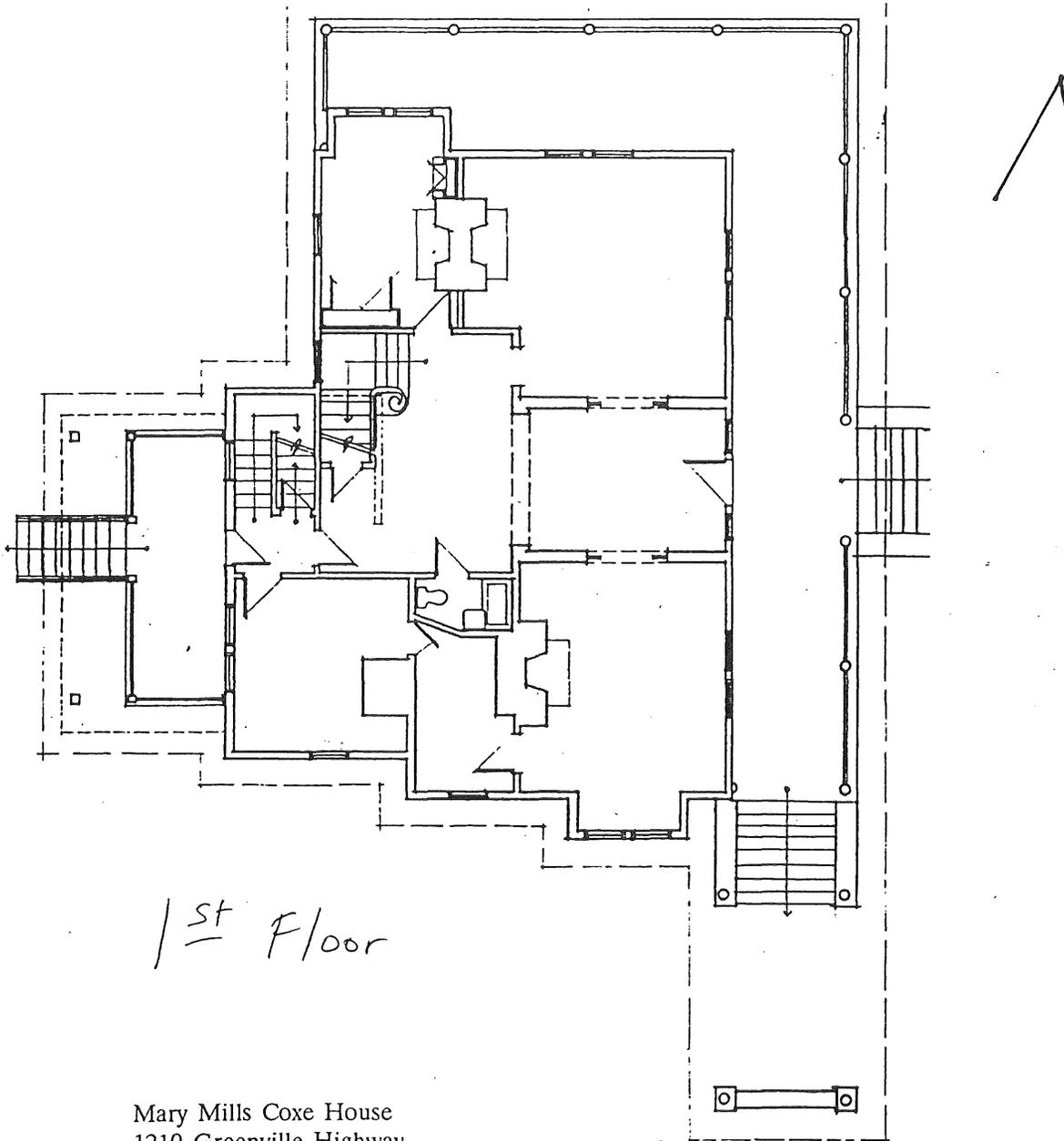


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Mary Mills Coxe House  
Henderson County, NC



*1<sup>st</sup> Floor*

Mary Mills Coxe House  
1210 Greenville Highway  
Hendersonville vicinity, Henderson County, NC

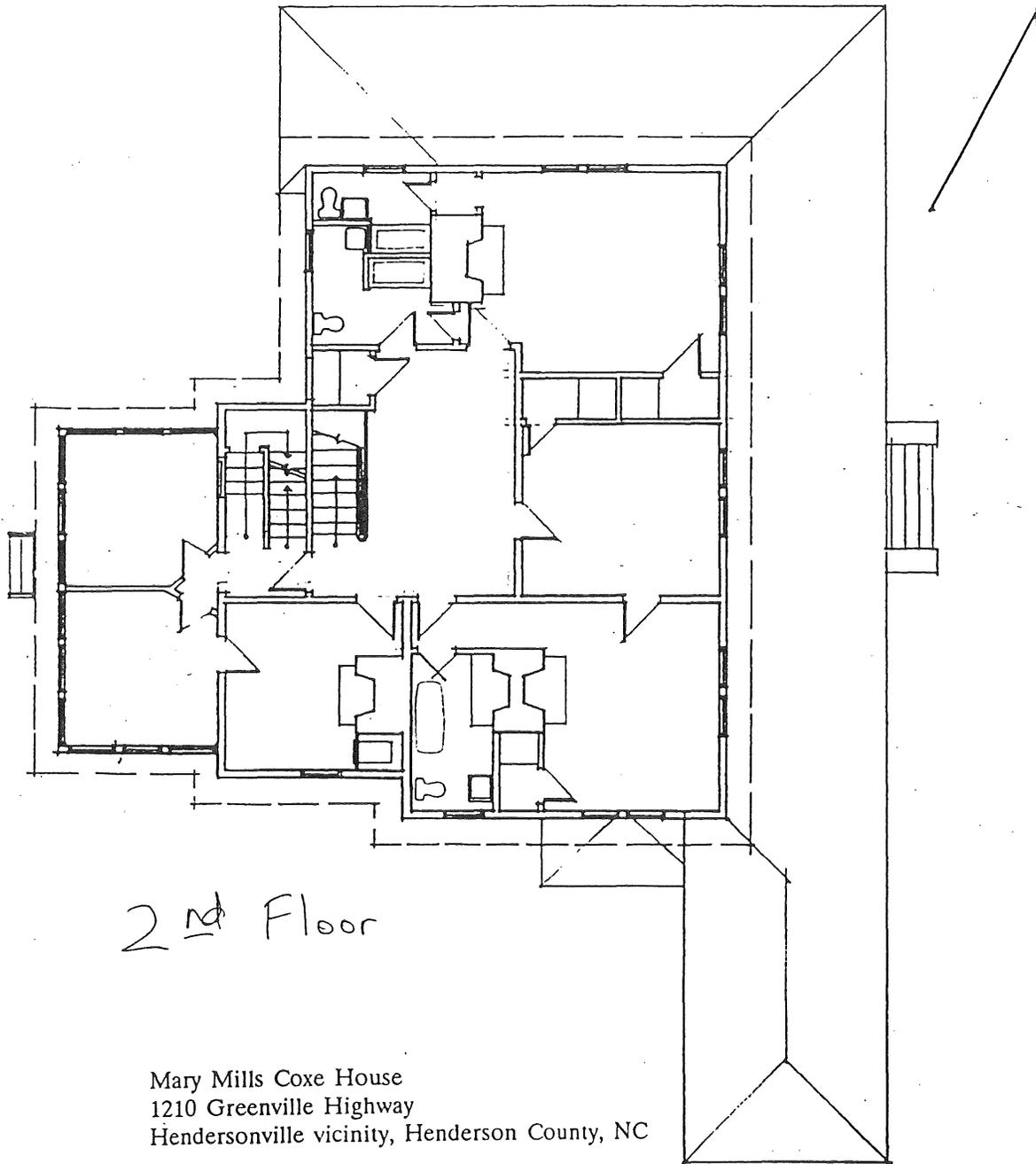
Floorplans drawn by Lotus Development and  
Construction Company, 1993

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Mary Mills Coxe House  
Henderson County, NC



Mary Mills Coxe House  
1210 Greenville Highway  
Hendersonville vicinity, Henderson County, NC

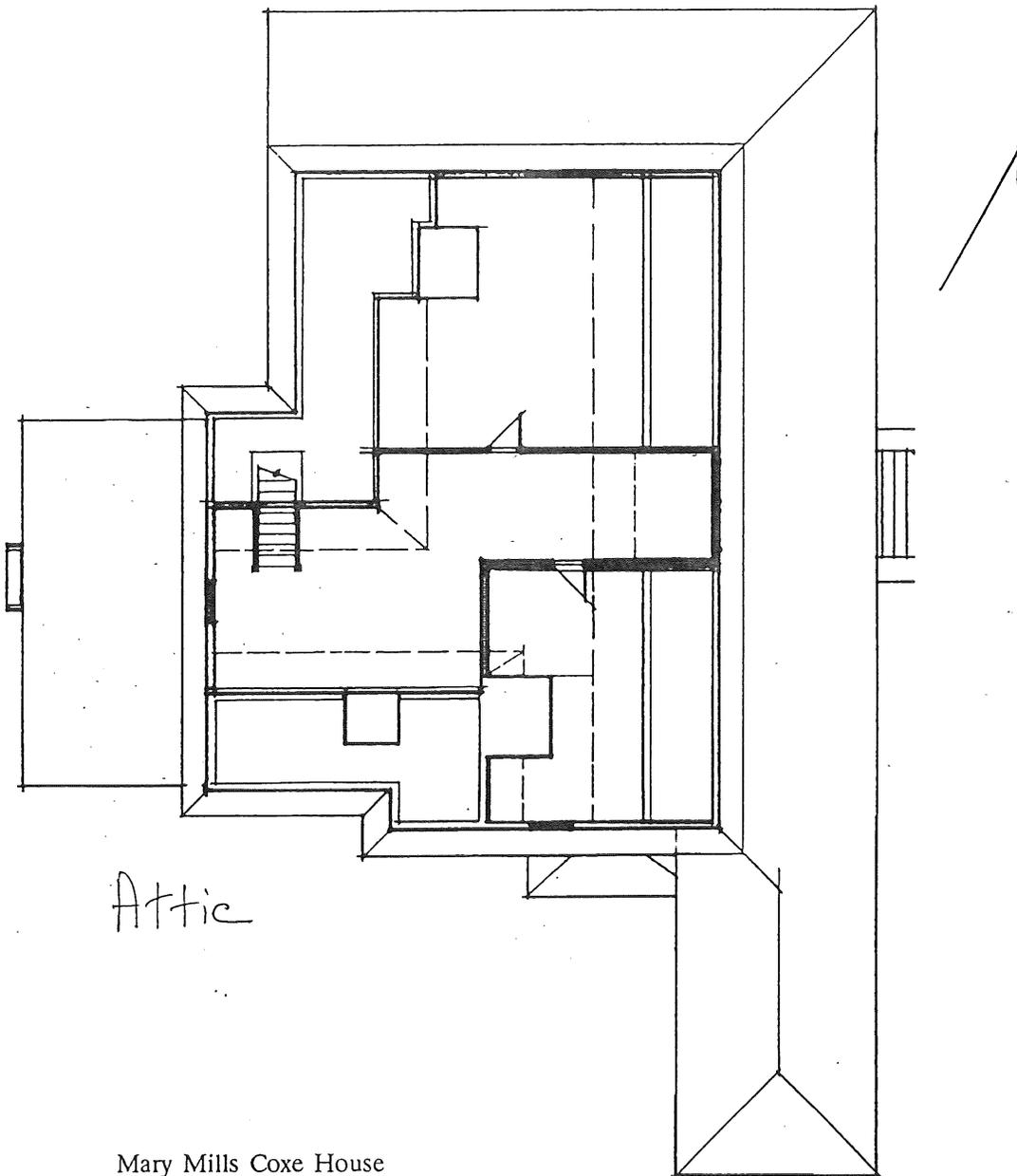
Floorplans drawn by Lotus Development and  
Construction Company, 1993

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Mary Mills Coxe House  
Henderson County, NC



Attic

Mary Mills Coxe House  
1210 Greenville Highway  
Hendersonville vicinity, Henderson County, NC

Floorplans drawn by Lotus Development and  
Construction Company, 1993

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Mary Mills Coxe House  
Henderson County, NC

The following information is true for all photographs accompanying this nomination.

Name of property: Mary Mills Coxe House (Miramichi)  
Location: 1210 Greenville Highway  
Hendersonville vicinity  
Henderson County, NC  
Photographer: Langdon E. Oppermann  
Date of Photo: March 1994  
Location of original negative: SHPO Office  
NC Division of Archives & History  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Photo #

- 1 House (Entry 1)  
Front (west) elevation  
Photographer facing SE
- 2 House  
Rear (east) elevation  
Photographer facing W
- 3 House (interior)  
Stair  
Photographer facing E
- 4 House (interior)  
Dining Room  
Photographer facing N
- 5 Carriage House (Entry 2)  
Front (north) and west side facades  
Photographer facing SE

Mary Mills Cox House  
1210 Greenville Highway  
Hendersonville vicinity (S)  
Henderson Co., NC  
N 3906700  
E 362040

4454 1 SE  
(HORSE SHOE 193-SE) BREVARD 18 MI.  
HORSE SHOE 3.5 MI.



