

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Douglas Ellington House

and or common

2. Location

street & number 583 Chunns Cove Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Asheville

N/A vicinity of

state North Carolina

code 037

county Buncombe

code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Sallie Ellington Middleton and Mrs. Martha Ellington Pettigrew

street & number 583 Chunns Cove Road

city, town Asheville

N/A vicinity of

state North Carolina 28805

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds

street & number Buncombe County Courthouse

city, town Asheville

state North Carolina 28807

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Buncombe County Historic Properties Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978-79 federal state county local

depository for survey records N. C. Division of Archives and History

city, town 13 Veterans Drive, Asheville,

state N.C. 28805

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

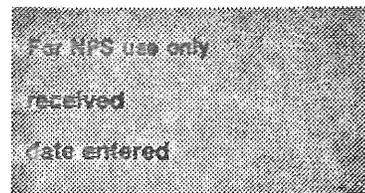
The house that architect Douglas Ellington designed and built for himself in 1926 is located near the north end of Chunn's Cove, less than two miles east and north of downtown Asheville, North Carolina. Chunn's Cove runs north and south just east of the mountain ridge known north to south as Sunset Mountain, Patton Mountain, and Beaucatcher Mountain. Ross Creek drains the cove, flowing into the Swannanoa River three miles south of the Ellington House. Until the opening of Beaucatcher Tunnel in 1930, Chunn's Cove was effectively removed from downtown Asheville by the intervening ridge, which may help to explain why Ellington was able to purchase a three-acre tract near the head of the cove for \$10. Subsequent purchases expanded his property to six and one half acres, all of which is included in this nomination.

The Ellington House is sited approximately three hundred feet east of Chunn's Cove Road, facing west. Entrance to the property is made along a gravel drive that dips to cross Ross Creek and winds through rhododendron and wooded creek bottom. The house is not visible from Chunn's Cove Road. The gravel drive brings one to a small parking area and turnaround just below the house. The architectural development of the site begins with a flat-roofed fieldstone garage that opens to the drive from the north. The uphill wall of the garage is continuous with a tall fieldstone retaining wall which forms the east wall of the parking area and through which stone stairs provide access up to the level of the house. The roof of the garage is paved in stone and bounded by a heavy timber and stone rail and serves as a terrace off the south end of the house.

The Ellington House eludes stylistic description. It is a fanciful and highly picturesque composition, primarily of rough stone and brick, evocative of both cottage and castle imagery. It is basically a collage of images and materials, but the overall effect, especially in its weathered and ivy-covered present state, is one of organic unity.

The house is a long mass, built up of three distinct elements covered by a complex, wood-shingle roof, and set into a grassy, terraced clearing on the wooded hillside. Ascending from the parking area, one arrives at the building at its southwest corner. From south to north, the major components are: a two-bay, one and one-half story brick "cottage" under a broad-eaved, wood shingled hip roof pierced by wall dormers; a five-bay, uncoursed stone central block which presents a tall, ivy-covered, parapeted wall on the principal elevation; and a traditional, single-room log cabin, said to have been on the property when Ellington bought it and thought to be over one-hundred years old.

Two similar architectural "knuckles" punctuate the composition between these three elements: Between the cottage and central block a vertical mass containing a principal entrance rises into a massive, tiered chimney stack; between the cabin and central block another vertical mass holds another entrance. These knuckles and the central block between them step up the hill behind the house and function at a split level, about three-quarters story above the ground-floor level, on the rear elevation. The knuckles provide exits to the rear and north end at this split level and each is covered by a small, convex, slide-like shed roof that sheds water to the rear.

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Continuation sheet DESCRIPTION Item number 7 Page one

Whereas the central block presents a parapeted stone wall on the west elevation, its east elevation returns to cottage imagery as a one-story (at the three-quarters story raised rear level) half-timbered wall under a shingled gable roof. The wall is built up of heavy vertical timbers, infilled with brick stacked on the diagonal, so that the overall pattern is herringbone or feather-like (a recurring motif on Ellington's Asheville City Building).

Four sets of tall, cypress casement windows, two paired centrally, punctuate the half-timbered rear wall. Other windows in the house are also casement-type under energetic, rough stone flat arches. The window into the central block on the principal elevation is covered with a heavy metal screen punched in a quatrefoil pattern (identical screens were used at Ellington's Asheville High School).

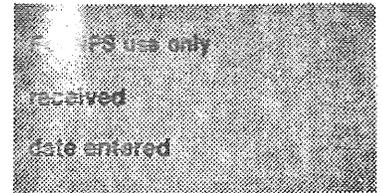
The house is replete with inventive, somewhat whimsical details. Returning to the cottage section on the south end: the mottled brick walls (or recycled red and salmon brick) rest on an uncoursed stone foundation which is continuous with a low stone retaining wall to the south of the house and which presents a waist-high rough foundation pile at the highly visible southwest corner, thus further wedding house to landscaping and site. Second-floor joists extend out of the walls about eighteen inches, marking the floor level and scaling down the exterior walls. Between these projecting joists and the eave the brick is laid in a broad, chevron band. The deep eave is open beneath and is supported on rafter extensions notched into wall braces. Gabled wall dormers, sheathed in wood shingles and ornamented with cast iron railings and other "found" cast iron ornament, pierce the eave mid-way across each elevation.

Both exterior and interior doors are made of cypress planks, V-jointed and battened. They display prominent wrought false hinge straps. The principal entrance is into the base of the verticle knuckle at the north end of the central block under a round arch built up of flat fieldstone. The door is broadly lit in its upper half by clear and stained glass set in a broken grid pattern. Outsized flame-like hinge straps and a wrought "E" further ornament the door. An elliptical sunburst medallion is set in the tympanum above the door.

Upon entering, one is in a small marble-paved stair hall, with doors to the central, living room to the right and cabin room to the left. Rustic, timber stairs ascend to the rear of the house. As reflected on its exterior, the house is laid out on several levels. On the entrance level are just three major rooms, corresponding to the three major components of the exterior form: a kitchen-dining space in the cottage-like element on the south end; a large, high-ceilinged living room, or living hall, in the central block; and the cabin room to the north. The stairs at the entrance lead up to a long hall that returns to the south the length of the living hall at three-quarters story height, and which serves bedrooms and bath to the rear of the house. At the end of the hall another set of stairs winds up a quarter turn to the level of the master bedroom, above the kitchen. Yet another level is gained by ascending a second flight of stairs in the entrance hall, up to a small service space which opens onto a gravel roof terrace which carries the length of the central block on the front of the house.

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In general the house's interior is finished rustically and inventively, in keeping with its exterior. Wall surfaces are either unpainted chestnut or stone; floors are wood or tile. The principal interior space is the living hall, which has stone walls on three sides, a high, timber-beamed ceiling, and which is dominated at its southern end by a massive fireplace composition. Cut stone forms the fire box utilizing a flat arch with prominent skewbacks. The flat arch is surmounted by a stone shelf and tall fan of rough stone, which in turn is surmounted by a timber shelf. Next to the fireplace, in the southeast corner of the room, the quarter-turn winding stairway leading up to the master bedroom breaks into the living hall revealing something of the building's plan and adding considerable interest to the hall. The winders are heavy timbers--the stair rail a heavy hemp rope on twisted iron balusters.

Another exceptional space is the kitchen-dining room. It displays a pieced quarry-tile floor, cream-colored brick walls topped by a checkered brick frieze, and a ceiling of composition panels with dark lozenge-row battens. On the north wall of the kitchen, an arched cooking niche is served by the building's massive chimney stack.

Both inside and out the building is filled with eccentric details too numerous to catalogue. Several outbuildings survive on the property in addition to the main house: a shed-roofed, chinked, log utility shed at the south end of the parking area; a hip-roofed stone caretaker's hut in the woods due south of the house; and a traditional privy, of chestnut, adjacent to the caretaker's hut.

The Douglas Ellington House is a charming and important reflection of the skill and taste of one of North Carolina's more prominent architects. Although it bears little stylistic relation to this major designs, it does give witness to his wit and inventiveness and may as well shed light on other of his domestic designs, which have received little study. After years of minimal maintenance, the property is now in the hands of his niece, Sallie Middleton, who is hard at work reclaiming the grounds from the woods that had almost overtaken them, and who looks toward a major round of restorative work on the house.

To the rear of the house at the edge of the woods is a simple granite memorial to its designer and builder, Douglas Ellington, whose ashes were scattered on the hillside.

Addendum

Another Ellington niece, Mrs. Martha Ellington Pettigrew, provided the following additional information upon reviewing a draft of the nomination in March 1986:

1. The massive pine timbers used throughout the house (such as beams and steps) were reportedly from an abandoned log schoolhouse near Weaverville (N.C.), attended by N. C. Governor Zeb Vance in his youth.

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2. The ironwork used extensively in the house was hand wrought by blacksmith Daniel Boone of Burnsville (N.C.), a descendant of well-known pioneer Daniel Boone.
3. Lanterns used as lighting fixtures in the house are salvaged ships' lanterns, durably crafted of brass and iron.
4. All excavation for siting the house was accomplished with shovel and pick-axe, wheelbarrow, mule, and stone-boat.
5. The house was constructed utilizing local labor primarily, but also with contributions by one skilled Italian stonemason.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1926 Builder/Architect Douglas Ellington

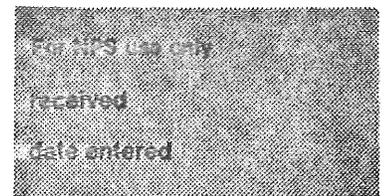
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Douglas Ellington House, in the Chunns Cove section of Asheville, North Carolina, was built in 1926 by and for Ellington, one of the state's most prominent architects. Douglas Ellington was born in Clayton, North Carolina in 1886. He was educated at Randolph-Macon College, Drexel Institute, the University of Pennsylvania and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Ellington was a professor of architecture at several northern colleges prior to his arrival in Asheville around 1925. While in Asheville Ellington designed several of the most important buildings built in the city during the boom decade of the 1920s. Particularly important were the 1928 City Hall building and the 1929 S&W Cafeteria building, regarded as perhaps the finest Art Deco building in North Carolina. The Ellington House is a rambling, romantic composition of native materials, evocative of both cottage and castle imagery. Its principal material is local field and river stone, but it also utilizes brick, log, and half-timbering beneath a complex wood-shingle roof. The house is replete with inventive details and "found" materials, some from other Ellington projects. It is arranged in several levels and set into its terraced, hillside site. Ellington's niece, Sallie Middleton, now owns the property and is slowly restoring the house, landscaped grounds, and outbuildings.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT:

B. Douglas Ellington was one of North Carolina's most prominent architects. This is the home he built and occupied during his most productive and important in-state work.

C. The house is important architecturally as perhaps the most personal design statement of an extremely talented and widely acclaimed artist and architect.

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The Douglas Ellington House is located in the Chunn's Cove section of Asheville. The house was built by Ellington, a prominent architect and artist, in 1926. The house has considerable architectural significance as "one of the most special houses in Asheville"¹ and historical significance as the residence of a man prominent in the development of modern Asheville.

Douglas Ellington was born in Clayton, North Carolina, in 1886, the son of Jessie Ellington, a Johnston County farmer and Civil War veteran. Ellington was uncommonly well educated for a rural southerner of his time, attending Randolph-Macon College, Drexel Institute, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. While in Paris, Ellington became the first American to win the Prix Rougevin for architecture and the first southerner to win the Prix de Paris.²

Ellington was a professor of architecture at Drexel Institute in the early 1920s. Around 1925 he came to Asheville and designed several of that city's most impressive buildings.³ With the arrival of the railroad in the 1880s Asheville took its place as one of the country's leading resort cities. The growth of the city in the period from the mid 1880s until the Great Depression of the 1930s was considerable. Ellington arrived in Asheville during a major land boom which ran through the entire 1920s.

Ellington designed a number of important buildings during Asheville's 1920 boom. Perhaps the most important was the City Hall building, completed in 1928. A massive Art Deco structure, the City Hall building houses a number of public functions and is regarded as one of the finest public buildings in the city. In 1927 Ellington designed Asheville's First Baptist Church and began work on the Asheville High School main building, which was completed in 1929. Also erected in 1929 was Ellington's S&W Cafeteria, a building called "perhaps North Carolina's finest example of Art Deco style architecture."⁴

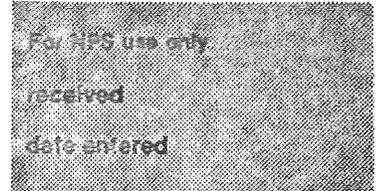
In 1926 Ellington purchased a three acre tract on Ross Creek from area farmer W. M. Taylor for ten dollars.⁵ The Ellington house was built around an old cabin. According to a niece, "In spite of the fact that he was a fine architect he refused to draw any plans for the place. Instead he sort of made the place as he went along. He used whatever native materials that came to hand and he had a marvelous time doing it."⁶ The house was built with predominantly local labor and used salvage material from other Ellington projects, such as tile from the S&W Cafeteria and stone from the City Hall. The result was a house rated one of the fifty most interesting residences in the United States by House Beautiful Magazine.⁷

Ellington never married. He lived in his Asheville residence with his brother Kenneth and his family. Kenneth Ellington was an attorney who acted as his brother's business manager. Although the Great Depression hit Asheville with considerable force Ellington was able to design some residences during this period. He also continued his other career, as an artist, with success. Ellington's paintings were exhibited in galleries in New York, Washington, Pittsburgh, Charleston and other cities.⁸

In 1937 Ellington and his family moved to Charleston, where he restored the famous Dock Street Theatre. Also in Charleston Ellington designed the Hampton Park Baptist

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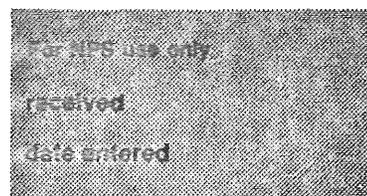
Church, the Friendship Baptist Church and at least seven other churches in Charleston and nearby communities, buildings for the United States Navy in Charleston and numerous businesses and residences. He was also responsible for a number of renovations and additions in the Charleston area. During the late 1920s he designed the model town of Greenbelt, Maryland, for the government's Works Progress Administration.⁹

During this period the Ellington family maintained residences in Charleston and Asheville, usually spending the summer in the Chunn's Cove house. Ellington lived full time in Asheville during the Second World War and lived there sporadically after the war until his death in 1960. The house is presently owned by his two nieces, Mrs. Martha Pettigrew and Mrs. Sallie Middleton.¹⁰

The Ellington house has strong historical significance for a number of reasons. A native North Carolinian, Ellington is one of the more prominent architects native to the state. His Asheville home was his residence at a time when he was doing some of his most productive work. Finally, the house is reflective of an important growth period in the history of the city.

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FOOTNOTES

¹William O. Moore, "Resort Asheville," North Carolina Architect, (July, 1978, Vol, 25, No. 4), 21, hereinafter cited as Moore, "Resort Asheville."

²Asheville Citizen-Times, August 28, 1960.

³Asheville Citizen-Times, August 28, 1960. Ellington also taught architecture at Columbia and at Carnegie Institute of Technology.

⁴Susanne Brendel, "Urban Asheville," North Carolina Architect (July, 1978, Vol. 25, No. 4), 14-15; Asheville Citizen-Times, August 28, 1960.

⁵Buncombe County Deed Book 359, p. 44.

⁶Doris Cline Ward (ed.), The Heritage of Old Buncombe County (Asheville: The Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society, 1981), 104, hereinafter cited as Ward (ed.) The Heritage of Old Buncombe County.

⁷Ward, The Heritage of Old Buncombe County, 103-104; Asheville Citizen-Times August 28, 1960; Moore, "Resort Asheville," 21.

⁸Ward, The Heritage of Old Buncombe County, 104.

⁹Asheville Citizen-Times, August 28, 1960; Ward, The Heritage of Old Buncombe County, 103-105.

¹⁰Information supplied by Mrs. Sallie Middleton.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 6.5 acres

Quadrangle name Asheville, NC

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	3	6	2	0	3	0	3	9	4	2	5	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached Buncombe County tax map. Boundary of nominated property outlined in red.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Description by Douglas Swaim, Preservation Specialist
Significance by Jim Sumner, Research Historian

organization N.C. Division of Archives and History date April 10, 1986

street & number 109 E. Jones Street telephone 919-733-6545

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. Price, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Office date September 12, 1986

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

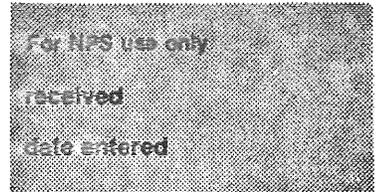
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Brendel, Susanne. "Urban Asheville." North Carolina Architect. July, 1978, Vol. 25, No. 4.

Buncombe County Deed Books.

Middleton, Mrs. Sallie. Information supplied by.

Moore, William O. "Resort Asheville." North Carolina Architect. July, 1978. Vol. 25, No. 4.

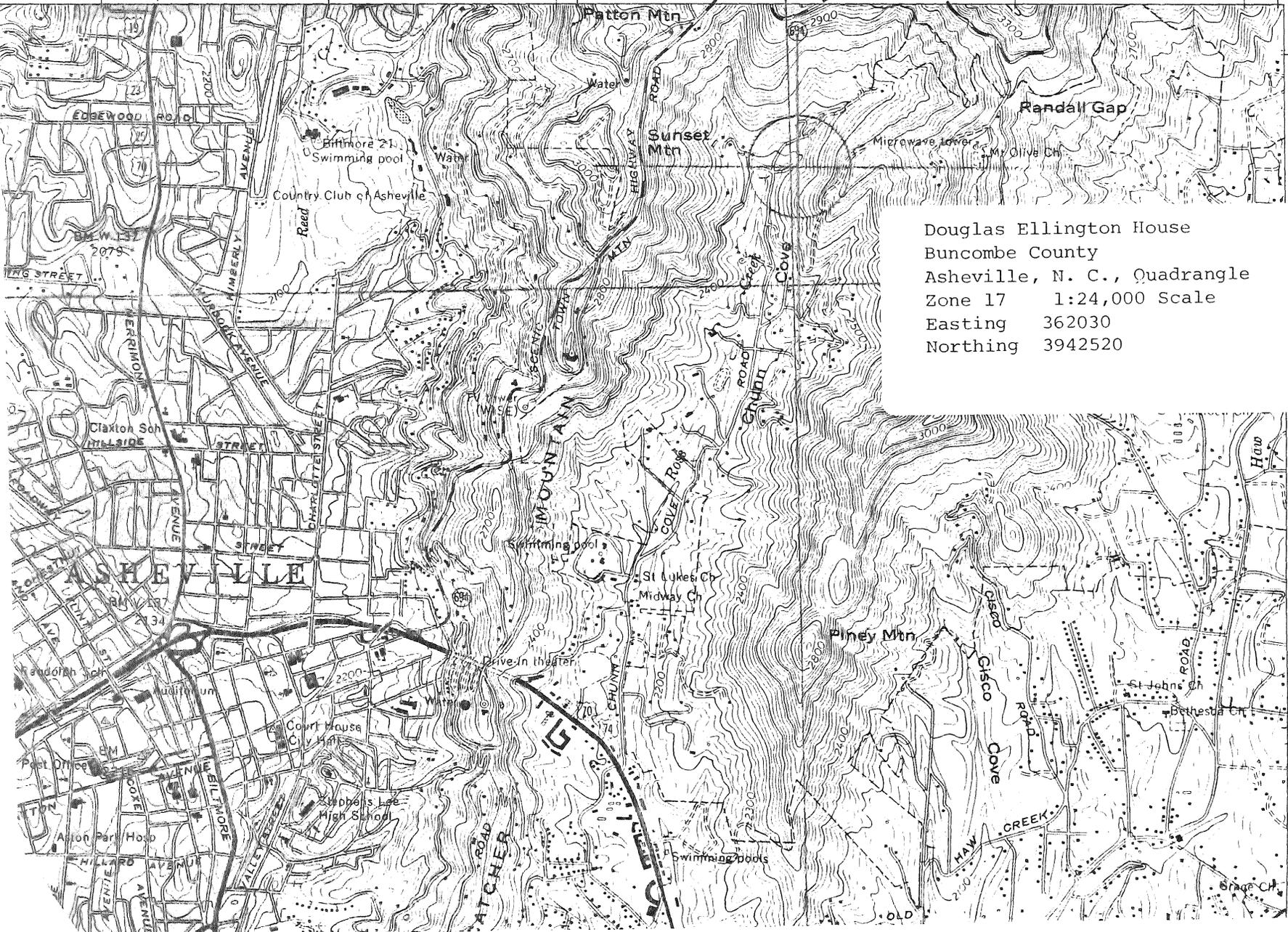
Ward, Doris Cline (ed.). The Heritage of Old Buncombe County. Asheville: The Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society.

STATES
LEY AUTHORITY
VEYS BRANCH

ASHEVILLE QUADRANGLE
NORTH CAROLINA-BUNCOMBE CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC) 192-SE
BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY 4.4 MI.

1555 III NW
(CRAGGY PINNACLE 201-NW)

192-NE) 359 3.6 MI. TO JUNCTION U.S. 19, U.S. 23,
U.S. 25, & U.S. 70 360 32' 30" 361 950 000 FEET 362 363 364 82° 30' 35° 37' 30"



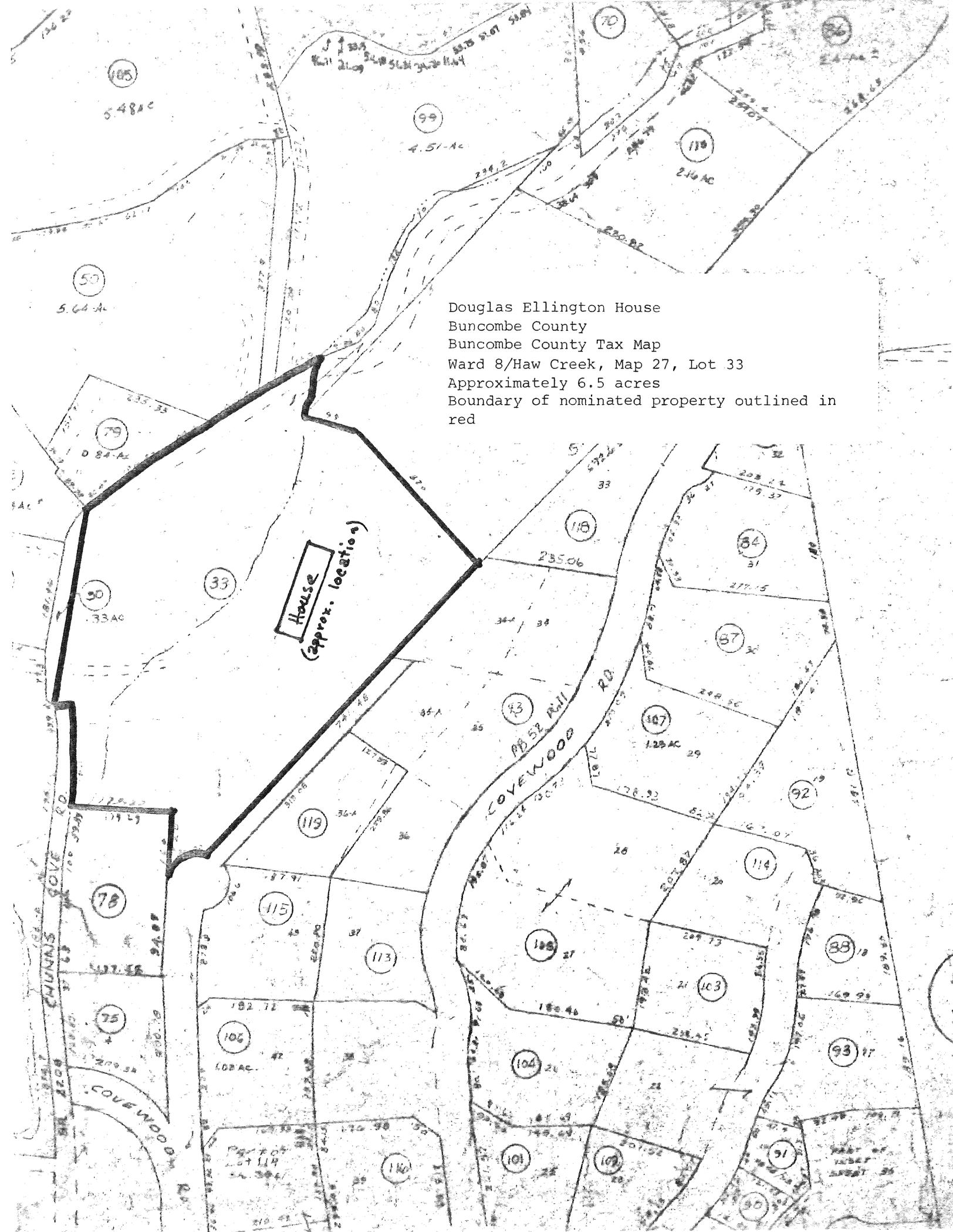
700 000
FEET
3943

Douglas Ellington House
Buncombe County
Asheville, N. C., Quadrangle
Zone 17 1:24,000 Scale
Easting 362030
Northing 3942520

3941

3940

GREEN 0.5 MI.
BLACK MTN. II MI.



Douglas Ellington House
Buncombe County
Buncombe County Tax Map
Ward 8/Haw Creek, Map 27, Lot 33
Approximately 6.5 acres
Boundary of nominated property outlined in red

House
(Approx. location)

