

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

Listed
VLR: 6/16/2016
NRHP: 8/15/2016

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Brightwells Mill Complex
 Other names/site number: Baldocks Mill; Mays Mill; DHR Nos. 005-0035
 Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 586 Brightwells Mill Road
 City or town: Madison Heights State: VA County: Amherst
 Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: X

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
 I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.
 I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
 level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local
 Applicable National Register Criteria:
 X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- 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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Manufacturing Facility: Mill

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling; Shed

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Processing: Smokehouse; Storage: Corn Crib

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Animal Facility: Chicken House; Brooding House

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Agricultural Outbuilding: Barn; Shed

FUNERARY: Cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling; Shed

FUNERARY: Cemetery

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Agricultural Outbuilding: Barn; Shed

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Grist Mill

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE; WOOD; METAL; CONCRETE:
Concrete Block; SYNTHETICS: Vinyl

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Brightwells Mill Complex is located along Brightwells Mill Road (County Road 663) from the intersection with Beck Creek Road (County Road 648) to the intersection with Red Hill Lane. This area is in southeast Amherst County, near the James River. It is rural with steep hills and fast-running creeks. The complex of 110 acres consists of two main areas: the mill area adjacent to Beck Creek and the farm area on the hill, north of the mill. The mill area consists of a three-story frame grist mill, dam, bridge and three outbuildings. The farm area includes the miller's house, barns, sheds, chicken house, and higher on the hill above the house is the cemetery. There has been a mill on the site since before 1826; the current building was rebuilt in 1942 when a flash flood destroyed both the dam and mill. The reconstructed mill incorporates salvaged material from the earlier mill and mill machinery from another county mill affected by the same storm. The mill stopped milling for human consumption about 1965. The log section of the miller's house was also built before 1826 and was expanded and remodeled in the 1940s. The property has a total of 14 contributing resources and 6 non-contributing resources. Brightwells Mill Complex retains integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

Narrative Description

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Setting

Brightwells Mill Complex is located in rural Amherst County where the topography is generally rolling and features numerous creeks. The mill complex stands close to the three-point intersection of Brightwells Mill Road (County Road 663) (which passes through the complex), Beck Creek Road (County Road 648), and Red Hill Lane. From Red Hill Lane, entry to complex is via a bridge that crosses Beck Creek. The mill building is a visually prominent feature at the intersection, with Beck Creek running along the mill's south side and a frame corn crib and chicken house east of the mill. At a point a short distance southwest of the mill, a dam extends across Beck Creek. The mill area also includes a workshop.

Proceeding into the complex by way of Brightwells Mill Road, the farm area consists of the miller's house and various farm buildings including barns and sheds. A cemetery is at the northernmost edge of the property and on the hill above the house.

Resources associated with Brightwells Mill Complex were evaluated as contributing or non-contributing to the property based on their association with the property's period and areas of significance and their integrity. In the following inventory, the resources are numbered to match their locations on the accompany sketch map.

Mill Area

1. Mill Dam-1942 Contributing Structure

The mill dam, originally constructed of log and earth, was breeched in a 1942 flash flood and was completely rebuilt in concrete by H. L. Brightwell and his sons. The concrete was reinforced with available scrap metal, including an old car axle. Etched in the concrete at the north edge of the dam is "H L Brightwell and Sons 1942." The dam and mill are connected with an enclosed sluice or flume constructed of metal.

2. Mill-1942 Contributing Building

The grist mill is a vernacular three-story frame building. H. L. Brightwell constructed the 1942 building using salvaged material from the original mill, lumber milled on-site, and the machinery from the nearby Sandidges Mill (005-5069). This new building was larger than the original mill.

The original mill was built by William Burford before 1826. It was a two-story frame building with a random stone foundation and a side-gable roof with cedar shake shingles. It was expanded some time during the 19th century with a one-story addition to the north or main elevation of the building. After 1920, Brightwell enlarged the addition to two stories and added a standing-seam metal roof. It was a grist mill set up for the milling of grains for local area farmers, a type also known as a plantation or custom mill. There were two sets of milling stones, one for corn and one for wheat. The mill wheel also powered a sawmill.¹

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The current frame mill was built in 1942 on what remained of the random stone foundation of the earlier building. This three-story mill is of platform frame construction with weatherboard siding on the exterior. Some of the interior support beams are the hand-planed original timbers, salvaged from the earlier building. The side-gable roof has exposed rafter tails and is sheathed with standing-seam metal. Typical windows have 6/6, wood, double-hung sash. The third floor of the north and south elevations has open bays with metal screen. There is a one-story office addition at the northwest corner. Since 2012, the mill has been undergoing restoration.

The main elevation faces north. It has three symmetrically placed bays on each story. The first-story bays are covered by a shed-roofed canopy of standing-seam metal supported by wood braces. The porch is wood and spans most of the elevation to the office. The main entry has a wide single-leaf Dutch door.

The office, in the northwest corner, has a shed roof of standing-seam metal. Its east elevation has a single-leaf Dutch door and a window. The north elevation is without fenestration, while the west elevation has a typical 6/6 window centered along the wall.

The mill's east elevation faces the road intersection. The first and second stories have three symmetrical bays. The third-story window is centered within the gable. The south elevation contains the metal overshot mill wheel; it is in the southwest corner of the elevation. The first story has two bays symmetrically placed to the east of the wheel. The second- and third-story bays mirror those of the east elevation.

The mill's west elevation faces the dam. Its first story has two symmetrically placed bays. There is a single bay on the third story in the gable.

Interior

The interior of the mill has an open plan on all three floors. The walls of the first floor are sheathed with plywood; the framing of the second and third floors is exposed. An open staircase is in the southeast corner of each floor. The center area of each floor contains the mill machinery that came from Sandidges Mill. The second and third floors have grain bins along the west, north, and east walls.

3. Bridge #6059-2013 Noncontributing Structure

The bridge inventoried by the Virginia Department of Transportation as #6059 is located east of the mill and was reconstructed in 2013. This bridge spans Beck Creek, and is constructed of a standardized, cast-in-place concrete deck with metal guard rails. The current bridge replaced an earlier bridge built in 1932.

4. Corn Crib-c.1942 Contributing Structure

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The corncrib sits north of the road intersection; it is east of the mill and next to the chicken house. It is on concrete piers and has horizontal wood siding that alternates each slat, one on the exterior and one on the interior. This allows space for air circulation. The shed roof, which slants to the north, has standing-seam metal sheathing. The main elevation faces south and has a centered single-leaf entry of vertical boards.

5. Chicken house with attached Outhouse-c.1942 Contributing Building

The frame building is two stories and replaced the building that was washed away by the 1942 freshet. It was built into the hillside on the opposite side of the road from the mill. It has a random stone foundation. The exterior is clad with weatherboard and the shed roof is covered with standing-seam metal. The main elevation faces south. The first story has a centered entry with a single-leaf door of vertical boards. The second story has an entry with a single-leaf door of vertical boards; it is located in the southeast corner. The east elevation is higher than the west. The siding covers the bottom half of each story, above which there are 14 open bays with wire on each story. The north elevation faces the hillside. On the ground level, an outhouse is attached to the building. On the second story, at the northeast corner, there is an entry with a single-leaf solid wood door and an aluminum storm door. The outhouse is clad with a vertical board and has a shed roof of standing-seam metal. The west elevation, on both stories, has four open bays with wire and horizontal bars.

6. Workshop-c.1980 Noncontributing Building

The workshop is located immediately north of the mill. It was built by Esmond Brightwell. It has a solid concrete slab foundation with concrete block walls. The side-gable roof is clad with standing-seam metal. It has an interior chimney flue of concrete block in the northwest corner. The main elevation faces south. It has two bays: a single-leaf metal door and a top opening 3/3 metal sash window. The west and north elevations are inaccessible. The east elevation has two bays, a solid single-leaf metal door and a window with a top opening 3/3 metal sash. The building was damaged and the masonry walls were cracked when a piece of heavy machinery ran into the wall. Brightwell used it to work on wood and metal projects.

Farm Area

7. Pump House-c.1980 Noncontributing Structure

This structure is located between the mill and house, along the east side of Brightwells Mill Road. It has a concrete slab foundation, concrete block walls and a shed roof of corrugated metal. There is a centered entry with a single-leaf vertical board door on the west elevation. This structure houses the pump that supplies water to the house.

8. Miller's House-c. 1826, c. mid-19th century, and 1947-Contributing Building

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The house is on a hill above the mill to the north. The farm yard is south of the house. The house is set apart from the barns and sheds by a natural wood three-rail fence. Within the fenced area are mature hardwood trees, English boxwoods and a Magnolia tree. There are foundation plantings around the house.

The vernacular miller's house was constructed in three campaigns. The earliest was a log section that is one-and-a-half stories with a hall parlor plan and an enclosed stair. From historic photographs, there was a porch with a wooden floor (same size as the current porch) and square wood posts supporting the shed roof. The side-gable roof with a simple boxed cornice and the porch roof were covered with cedar shakes, like those of the original mill building. Sometime during the 19th century, the house was enlarged with a one-story ell added to the east side at the northeast corner. In 1947, the house was enlarged to its present state with a one-story addition to the southeast corner of the original building and running to the rear of the mid-19th century addition. At this time, the interior was also remodeled.

The foundation of the original building and first addition are random stone. The 1947 addition has a concrete block foundation. The building has vinyl siding and the entire roof system is clad with standing-seam metal. There is an exterior random stone chimney on the north elevation of the c. 1826 section, a concrete-block, interior flue in the 19th century section, and an interior concrete-block flue near the east elevation. Most windows in the house have 6/6 double-hung sash.

The main elevation faces west. This is the oldest section of the house. It is one-and-a-half stories. There are two symmetrically placed bays on the first story; a single-leaf entry and a window with typical 6/6 sash. The entry has a solid wood door with three rectangular lights set diagonally in the upper section; it dates to c. 1947. The three-bay porch spans most of the elevation, it covers the doorway but the window is exposed. The foundation of the porch is random stone with a concrete slab floor. The shed roof is supported by brick piers topped with round metal posts. Between the piers is an iron railing with twisted balusters. There is a brick stair with two risers from the ground to the porch.

The north elevation exhibits all three periods of construction to the building. The western end is the oldest section. There is a random stone exterior end chimney with two shoulders. One window is east of the chimney on the first story; at the half story, there are two smaller 2/2 sash on either side of the chimney. The windows have exterior glass louvers. The central section of the elevation is the mid-19th century addition. There are two sets of two 6/6 double-hung sash windows. The eastern section of the elevation has a shed roof. There is a single-pane sash and a sliding window with two single panes.

The dwelling's east elevation has a window with a single-pane sash and two sets of sliding windows with two single panes at the north end of the elevation. The south end of the elevation is spanned by a shed-roofed porch; the roof is supported at the southeast corner by a round metal post. The porch deck is a concrete slab. Extending down from the eaves and surrounding the porch is a two-foot trellis. Access to the rear of the house is via a concrete stoop

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with seven risers leading to a single-leaf, south-facing entry with an aluminum screen door. The stoop has a metal pipe railing. Beneath the roof, on the east elevation is a typical window with 6/6 sash.

The south elevation consists of the original section of the house and the 1947 addition. The 1947 addition is offset about a foot to the south from the c. 1826 section. There is an entry with a single-leaf door featuring three horizontal panels in the lower half and nine lights in the upper half. There is a concrete stoop with a gable over-door with wood braces. Flanking the entry on the east are three 6/6 double-hung sash windows and on the west are two 6/6 double-hung sash windows. At the west end, the oldest section of the elevation, there is a typical window with 6/6 sash on the first story and at the half story is a 2/2 sash with glass louvers on the exterior.

Interior

The interior of the house has five main rooms and the hall on the first floor and one room at the half story. The house was remodeled in 1947. An archway was placed between the original hall and parlor. The mantel and fireplace were redone and the current mantel is a simple vernacular type. The c. 1826 section of the dwelling retains unadorned board window trim. The wood paneling throughout the house as well as the wood flooring dates to the mid-20th century. The kitchen, located on the rear (north) side of the house, has c. 1947 cabinetry made by Esmond Brightwell and the metal, free-standing wood stove was also made by Esmond Brightwell in the early 1970s.

9. Smokehouse-c. 1947 Contributing Structure

The smokehouse is southeast of the house. The fully enclosed area of the building is within the fenced yard; an addition on its south side is outside the fence. The structure's framing dates to the nineteenth century, but Brightwell redid the building by putting it on a concrete slab with a ramp on the west. The main elevation faces west and has a centered entry with a wood single-leaf, six-panel door that was cut to fit an earlier opening. The north elevation has a small four-pane sash window. The south side is open.

10. Railroad Building-c.1900-1920 Contributing Building

The building was a shanty used by the railroad during the early twentieth century, and was brought to the farm around 1947 for use as a farm shed. It is in the area near the eastern edge of the hill and east of the Brooding House. It does not have a foundation. The building has a gable-front roof and is covered with corrugated metal. The main elevation faces north, and has a ramp from the ground to a centered entry with a wood single-leaf door. The door has louvers in the lower half and wood board filling the area that was once glass.

11. Brooding House-c.1950 Contributing Building

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The large post-in-ground building, south of the house, was used for the chicks. It has vinyl siding, a shed roof of standing-seam metal and a central interior chimney of concrete block. The east elevation has 10 bays of various sizes; two are vertical board doors and the remainder are open with chicken wire. There are three open bays along the west elevation; these have chicken wire in them.

12. Three-part Barn-c.1950s Contributing Building

The three-part barn has three different, but adjoined construction methods. It is located south of the brooding house. The north section has corrugated metal siding and a gable-front, standing-seam metal roof and, on the north elevation, has two sets of double-leaf metal doors. The middle section is frame with weatherboard siding, a side-gable corrugated metal roof and an interior, brick chimney flue, and its west elevation has an open bay with chicken wire. The rear (southern) section is post-in-ground with a shed roof of standing-seam metal and corrugated metal siding on its south elevation and on part of the east elevation.

13. Shed-c.1940s Noncontributing Building

The shed is located in the southeastern section of the farm yard. It is partially fallen, but once had a shed roof of standing-seam metal, two open bays on the west elevation, and vertical board siding on the north, east, and south elevations.

14. Barn-1984 Noncontributing Building

The current barn, located in the southernmost section of the farm yard, replaced an earlier one that burned in 1984. It has a large center section with a gable-front roof and shed roofs to either side. The building has standing-seam metal roofing and patterned metal siding on the sides that rise above the shed roofs. The lower walls have vertical board siding. On the main (north) elevation is a double-leaf sliding metal door in the center and a small single-leaf metal door in the lower sections.

15. Pole Shed-c.1950s Contributing Structure

This shed is located across Brightwells Mill Road in the pasture to the northeast of the miller's house. It is post-in-ground construction. The main section is open with three bays. The standing-seam metal roof slants to the west. The south end of the building is lower, has a shed roof of standing-seam metal and is enclosed with corrugated metal.

16. Shed-c.2012 Noncontributing Building

This building is northeast of the pole shed in the same pasture. It is small and sits on the ground. It has vertical board siding and a side-gable, asphalt-shingle roof. The main (west) elevation has a centered entry with a single-leaf vertical board door.

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17. Cemetery- Contributing Site

This is commonly known as the Baldock family cemetery. It is located on the hill north of the pole shed, near Red Hill Road. It is overgrown but has a small cedar tree. There are approximately nine burials, but only seven are marked. The earliest burial dates to 1894 and the last, by the Brightwell family, to 1935.

Ruins

18. Ruins of former two-story Chicken House-c.1940s, Contributing Site

The remains of this building are located on the hillside immediately north of the mill. It is seen in many historic Brightwell family photos. The site is overgrown with bamboo.

19. Tobacco Barn-19th c., Contributing Site

The tobacco barn once sat in the northeast pasture, to the east of the pole shed. A few foundation timbers remain. It is known that tobacco was grown by John Baldock, according to the 1880 agricultural census. The family used the barn for storage until it was taken down by Esmond Brightwell.

20. Ice House-19th c., Contributing Site

The ice house was located in the northeast pasture, next to the road and west of the pole shed. The ice pond was below the miller's house on the west and ice was collected and stored in the ice house.

Possible Site for Future Identification

Oscar Baldock's Store-c.1900

Historic photos show a two-story frame store located on the property, but its site is unknown. It is speculated to have been somewhere close to the mill.

Integrity Statement

Brightwells Mill Complex retains much of its integrity of location, setting, form, function, materials, and workmanship in the individual buildings of the complex but the historical and architectural significance is best conveyed as whole group. The farm and mill stand on a site which has been used for these purposes since early settlement of Amherst County. The buildings, especially the mill, are traditional in form and design according to their function. Most of the exteriors of the buildings remain unaltered. The mill retains historic machinery and its interior plan is unaltered since 1942. The complex is a rare example of an intact farm and milling complex in Amherst County.

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1826-1965

Significant Dates

1826

1942

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Brightwell, Harmon L. (1891-1951)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Brightwells Mill Complex is locally significant to Amherst County for the period 1826-1965. It is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Industry and Commerce. The mill was a community center where grain crops and lumber were brought by local farmers for processing; the farm provided food and additional income for the miller's family. The mill complex is significant under Criterion C as an example of a vernacular 19th- to mid-20th century farming and milling complex with intact examples of a historic mill, miller's dwelling, and assorted support buildings that have significance as a group greater than the sum of their individual parts. The property's period of significance begins in 1826 with construction of the earliest section of the frame dwelling and ends in 1965, when the mill ceased processing grains for human consumption.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Significance in Industry and Commerce

Amherst County, in the late 18th through 19th century, had many mills along its numerous fast and dependable creeks. Many sites were ideal, with steep hillsides and easy access to roads or the James River. Most of the mills were small plantation or custom mills that ground grain for nearby farms. Many of these became the center of a small community with businesses based on providing goods and services to local farmers. There were two noted, larger, commercial mills along the James River that ground wheat for export: Stapleton Mill (c. 1823, now a ruin) and Galts Mill (DHR# 005-0036). These were within five miles of Brightwells Mill and, at different times, Brightwells was a companion mill (either owned or run by the same miller) to both Stapleton and Galts. Today, only four mill buildings remain standing in the county: Galts, Sandidges (DHR # 005-5069), Amherst (c. 1813, still operational) and Brightwells (1942).²

Brightwells is located in the southeast section of the county on Beck Creek (historically known as Stovall's Creek) and inland from the James River about three miles. It is an area that remains rural and somewhat isolated from the growth of the town of Madison Heights. It sits at the intersection of Brightwell Mill Road and Beck Creek Road. This was an intersection of two historically important roads: the road from Lynchburg that led to a tavern in central Amherst called "the Folly;" and the Galts Mill Road (now Beck Creek Road) that led to both Galts and Stapleton Mills, running along the James River.³

Milling and farming operations at the nominated property have been taking place since at least the 1820s. The original mill was built before 1826 by William Burford (1759-1833). He also built the c. 1826 original log section of the miller's house around the same time; it was the

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mansion house for his landholdings according to an 1833 plat. Burford sold the mill and farm to his son-in-law, Charles Mays (1763-1848). Mays Mill, as it was first known historically, remained in the Mays family until 1872, when Elijah B. Mays (1828-1910), son of Charles, sold the mill to his nephew, Samuel J. Bailey (1836-1915).⁴

In 1873, Bailey sold the mill to John H. Baldock (1836-1894), from whom the mill acquired its second historical name, and from 1873 to 1881 it was the companion mill to Stapleton. John Baldock was listed as the miller at Stapleton for 1870 and 1880 according to federal industry census records. In the same records, the miller at Mays/Baldocks Mill was William Brook (b. 1811). In 1881, the Stapleton Mill was sold to the Central Virginia Iron Company and mill operation ceased. John Baldock moved to Baldocks Mill until his death and was the first burial in the cemetery on the hill above the miller's house.⁵

Oscar Baldock (1864-1911) returned to the area after his father, John's, death. Oscar Baldock had been living in Campbell County. John Baldock's will stated the mill was to be sold at public auction. In 1896, it was bought by William McLaughlin (1856-1939), who lived and worked in Lynchburg. In 1900, Edgar J. Turner (1862-1943), owner of Galts Mill, bought Baldocks Mill and from 1900-1908 it was the companion mill to Galts. During this period, we know that Oscar Baldock was working at the mill and in 1902 he was listed as postmaster at Baldocks. Oscar also built and operated a store; it was located near the mill but the exact site is unknown. In 1908, Oscar Baldock purchased the mill and farm from Turner. At his death, like his father, he was buried in the cemetery above the miller's house.⁶

After Oscar Baldock's death there was a succession of owners, Solomon Johns, E. M. Moore, and H. E. Graves, for whom little information exists. Graves sold the mill and farm to H. L. Brightwell in 1920. Harmon L. Brightwell (1891-1951) was a third-generation miller. He and his wife, Lessie (1895-1963), began expansion of both the mill and the farm operation. The mill building had a one-story addition that became two stories and two chicken houses were built for a small business which Lessie ran by selling her eggs to nearby stores.⁷

In 1942, a storm caused a freshet which breached the mill's 19th-century earthen and log dam. The flood washed the old mill building and one of the chicken houses down Beck Creek. The mill stones and the mill wheel were all that remained. It was a catastrophic loss of both unprocessed and processed grain and chickens. This was during a period when materials were rationed during World War II so everything that could be salvaged from the early building was reused, including some of the support timbers. The concrete of the dam was reinforced with whatever scrap metal was nearby including an old car axle. The milling machinery was acquired from Sandidges Mill (DHR #005-5069) after the same storm destroyed its mill race and the mill closed permanently. After the sawmill was restored, lumber was milled onsite and the new mill was constructed; within a year it reopened. Harmon Brightwell also constructed new buildings on the property and he remodeled and expanded the miller's house.⁸

Harmon Brightwell died in 1951. Esmond, Harmon's youngest son, took over milling. In 1965, he stopped grinding for human consumption due to competition from large-scale mills and

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government regulations; he continued to grind for livestock feed into the 1990s. Esmond Brightwell continues to live in the miller's house. His children began restoration of the mill in 2012 and it has evolved into a community effort with volunteers working on the building and support by fundraising for materials. They hope to fully restore and make the mill operational.⁹

For more than 150 years, Brightwells Mill contributed to the production and commercial processing of grains in Amherst County and was a companion mill to other commercial mills nearby. It was the focal point of a small community of surrounding farms. In the early through mid-20th century, Brightwells was one of a few mills still open and the farmers from the surrounding counties of Bedford, Campbell, and Nelson came to have their corn and wheat milled, as shown in a ledger from the 1960s. By this time, it also was one of the last water-powered mills in the county.¹⁰

Significance in Architecture

The Brightwells Mill Complex is an intact complex of 19th- and 20th-century domestic, agriculture, and industry buildings. The collection is architecturally significant as an example of a mill and farm complex with buildings of traditional type and form. Each building within the complex serves a particular function or purpose.

Historically, a miller worked a farm to feed his household and supplement his income with a cash crop. At Brightwells, some of the older buildings were repurposed when the cash crop of the farm changed. In the late 19th century the modest farm grew tobacco, but by the early 20th century, livestock such as cattle and poultry replaced tobacco as the cash crop of the farm. Older log barns were reused and additional barns, sheds, and coops were constructed for the cows and chickens and to store their food. The forms of the buildings are typical of many seen and used on farms throughout Amherst County. Most of the buildings were built with wood from the farm that was prepared at the mill. The mill building is traditional in form and size. It was rebuilt using materials salvaged for the original mill and farm-cut lumber. Today's mill is larger than the original because it was built to accommodate the machinery of the Sandidges Mill (005-5069). The mill further is distinguished for its retention of this historic milling equipment and machinery. In total, this property is an example of the increasingly rare milling and farming complexes that hold a significant place in Amherst County's history.¹¹

Brightwells Mill Complex
Name of Property

Amherst County, VA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Amherst County Deed Books. *Amherst County Courthouse, Amherst, VA, Various Books and Dates.*

Amherst County Land Tax Records. *Available on microfilm from Library of Virginia, various dates and rolls.*

Amherst County Museum and Historical Society. *Gravestone Inscriptions in Amherst County, VA.* Revised Edition 1999. Amherst County, VA: Amherst County Museum and Historical Society, 1999.

Amherst County Property Tax Records 1930-1988. *Amherst Commissioner of Revenue Office.*

Ancestry.com Various Genealogical Records.

Brightwell Family Files and Photographs. Various dates and years.

Brightwell, Ricky, interview by Sandra Esposito. *Personal Knowledge of Brightwell Mill History* (Various dates 2015).

Brighwell Mill file. *Amherst County Museum and Historical Society, Amherst, VA.*

Classical Milling Instructions. angelfire.com (accessed December 2, 2015).

Descendants of Terisha Turner. melissagenealogy.stormpages.com (accessed December 2, 2015).

Esposito, Sandra F. Galts Mill Historic District (005-5037). *dhr.virginia.gov.* (accessed December 2, 2015).

Flour Milling in America, A General Overview. angelfire.com (accessed December 2, 2015).

Galts Mill file. *Amherst County Museum and Historical Society, Amherst, VA.*

Historically: How to Site a Mill. angelfire.com (accessed December 2, 2015).

The History of Flour Milling in Early America. angelfire.com (accessed December 2, 2015).

Brightwells Mill Complex
Name of Property

Amherst County, VA
County and State

History Tech and Landmark Preservation Associates. *Amherst County Historic Resources Survey Report*. 2010.

Hobbs, T. Gibson, Jr. *The Canal on the James*. Lynchburg, Va.: Blackwell Press, 2009. pp. 10, 28, and 121-123.

Staples or Stapleton Mill file. *Amherst County Museum and Historical Society, Amherst, VA*.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR File No. 005-0035

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approx.. 110.6 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

a. Latitude: 37.275665N Longitude: 79.025721W

b. Latitude: 37.275077N Longitude: 79.024531W

Brightwells Mill Complex
Name of Property

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- c. Latitude: 37.275034N Longitude: 79.024276W
- d. Latitude: 37.274648N Longitude: 79.024292W
- e. Latitude: 37.274302N Longitude: 79.023496W
- f. Latitude: 37.273051N Longitude: 79.024090W
- g. Latitude: 37.272962N Longitude: 79.024929W
- h. Latitude: 37.272980N Longitude: 79.025423W
- i. Latitude: 37.273998N Longitude: 79.030578W

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- 1. Zone: Easting: Northing:
- 2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
- 3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
- 4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Tax Parcel Map, and encompasses Amherst County parcel number 150 A 35, as maintained by the Amherst County Commissioner of Revenue Office.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The historic boundaries are drawn to encompass the entirety of the acreage historically associated with the milling complex as well as all known historic resources, including the mill, miller's house, agricultural outbuildings, and agriculture fields, as well as the setting of the historic property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sandra F. Esposito
organization: N/A
street & number: 140 Cradon Hill Ln.

Brightwells Mill Complex
Name of Property

Amherst County, VA
County and State

city or town: Amherst state: VA zip code: 24521
e-mail: espositosf@earthlink.net
telephone: 434-946-7496
date: 1/22/2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Brightwells Mill Complex
City or Vicinity: Madison Heights
County: Amherst State: VA
Photographer: Sandra F. Esposito
Date Photographed: November 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 29. Mill Area, facing W.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0001

2 of 29. Farm Area, facing S.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0002

Brightwells Mill Complex

Name of Property

Amherst County, VA

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3 of 29. Cemetery, facing N.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0003

4 of 29. Mill and Dam, facing NW.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0004

5 of 29. Bridge, Chicken House and Corn Crib, facing N.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0005

6 of 29. Mill Sluice and Dam, facing N.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0006

7 of 29. Dam Detail, facing NW.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0007

8 of 29. Mill, facing NW.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0008

9 of 29. Mill, facing SW.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0009

10 of 29. Mill interior, first floor, facing S.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0010

11 of 29. Mill interior, framing detail between second and third floors, facing SW.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0011

12 of 29. Corn Crib, facing W.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0012

13 of 29. Chicken House with Outhouse, facing SE.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0013

14 of 29. Workshop, facing NW.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0014

15 of 29. Pumphouse, facing E.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0015

16 of 29. Miller's House, Main elevation, facing E.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0016

17 of 29. Miller's House, facing SE.

VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0017

Brightwells Mill Complex

Name of Property

Amherst County, VA

County and State

- 18 of 29. Miller's House, facing SW.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0018
- 19 of 29. Miller's House, facing NW.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0019
- 20 of 29. Smokehouse, facing NE.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0020
- 21 of 29. Railroad Building, facing SE.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0021
- 22 of 29. Brooding House, facing SE.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0022
- 23 of 29. Three-Part Barn, facing S/SE.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0023
- 24 of 29. Three-Part Barn, facing NE.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0024
- 25 of 29. Shed, facing SE.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0025
- 26 of 29. Barn, facing S.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_0026
- 27 of 29. Pole Shed and Shed, facing E.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_027
- 28 of 29. Cemetery, facing NE.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_028
- 29 of 29. Cemetery, detail, facing N.
VA_AmherstCounty_BrightwellMillComplex_029

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Brightwells Mill Complex
Name of Property

Amherst County, VA
County and State



Historic Image – Brightwells Mill Building As It Appeared in 1943.

Brightwells Mill Complex
Name of Property

Amherst County, VA
County and State

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The original mill is known through historic photographs and the oral history of the Brightwell family.
- ² Historically: How to Site a Mill, angelfire.com; Flour Milling in America, A General Overview, angelfire.com; Staples or Stapleton Mill file, Amherst County Museum files; Esposito, Galts Mill Historic District Nomination; History Tech and Landmark Preservation Associates, Sandidges PIF, 2010.
- ³ Amherst County Deed Book 1132, p. 267.
- ⁴ Amherst County Deed Book R, p.169; Amherst County Will Book 8, p. 327; Amherst County Deed Book Z, p.596; Burford sold the mill to Charles, however it was noted in Burford's 1833 will that the land was to be kept for the benefit of his daughter's, Francis (d. 1826), children. Elijah, son of Frances and Charles, bought the mill from his father's estate. Elijah specified in deeds that the mill was to be held in trust for his wife's, Cassandra Turner Mays (1828-1872) benefit with the trust held by their nephew, Samuel J. Bailey. Elijah and Cassandra moved during the Civil War to Missouri and after her death the mill was sold. Elijah never returned to Virginia; Amherst County Deed Book DD, p.351; Amherst County Deed Book EE, p.429; Amherst County Deed Book GG, p.53; Amherst County Deed Book HH, p.463; Amherst County Land Tax Records microfilm reels 18, 19, 387, and 388; Ancestry.com Census Records and Birth, Marriage and Death Records; and Descendants of Terisha Turner.
- ⁵ Amherst County Deed Book JJ, p.128; 1870 and 1880 Industry Census; Ancestry.com Census Records and Birth, Marriage and Death Records; Amherst County Deed Book NN, pp. 1-4; and Amherst County Land Tax Records microfilm reels 599, 730, 791, and 882; and Amherst County Museum and Historical Society, p. 70.
- ⁶ Postmaster Records, Ancestry.com Census Records and Birth, Marriage and Death Records; Amherst County Will Book 23, p. 287; Amherst County Deed Book WW, pp.238-9; Esposito; Amherst County Deed Book ZZ, p.302; Amherst County Deed Book 61, p.70; Brightwell Family Files and Photographs Various dates and years. There is an article from The Amherst Progress, Vol 5, No 27, dated 11 June 1908, p 3; it describes a shooting in which Baldock shot a man, formerly employed by Baldock, who had threatened Baldock and his family, available online from virginiachronicle.com. In 1910, the lumber for the construction of Oakdale Baptist Church, a neighborhood church, was milled at Baldocks/Brightwells Mill (Conversations with Ricky Brightwell and Amherst County Heritage Book, Vol I, 1761-1999, p. 58.)
- ⁷ Amherst County Deed Book 65, p.500; Amherst County Deed Book 75, p.197; Amherst County Deed Book 74, p.282; Amherst County Deed Book 82, p.282; Brighwell Mill file, Amherst County Museum; Interview with Ricky Brightwell, various dates 2015; and Brightwell Family Files and Photographs Various dates and years.
- ⁸ Brighwell Mill file; Brightwell interview, 2015; Brightwell Family Files and Photographs Various dates and years; and History Tech and Landmark Preservation Associates, 2010.
- ⁹ Amherst County Deed Book 152, p.362; Amherst County Deed Book 228, p.279; and Brightwell interview, 2015
- ¹⁰ Brighwell Mill file.
- ¹¹ 1880 Nonpopulation Census (Agriculture) for John Baldock and oral history of Ricky Brightwell concerning H.L. Brightwell.

Legend

- Architecture Labels
- Architecture Points
- Historic Districts
- USGS GIS Place names
- Roads (12,000)
- Interstate
- US Primary Highway
- State Primary Highway
- Secondary
- Streams (NHD)
- County Boundaries

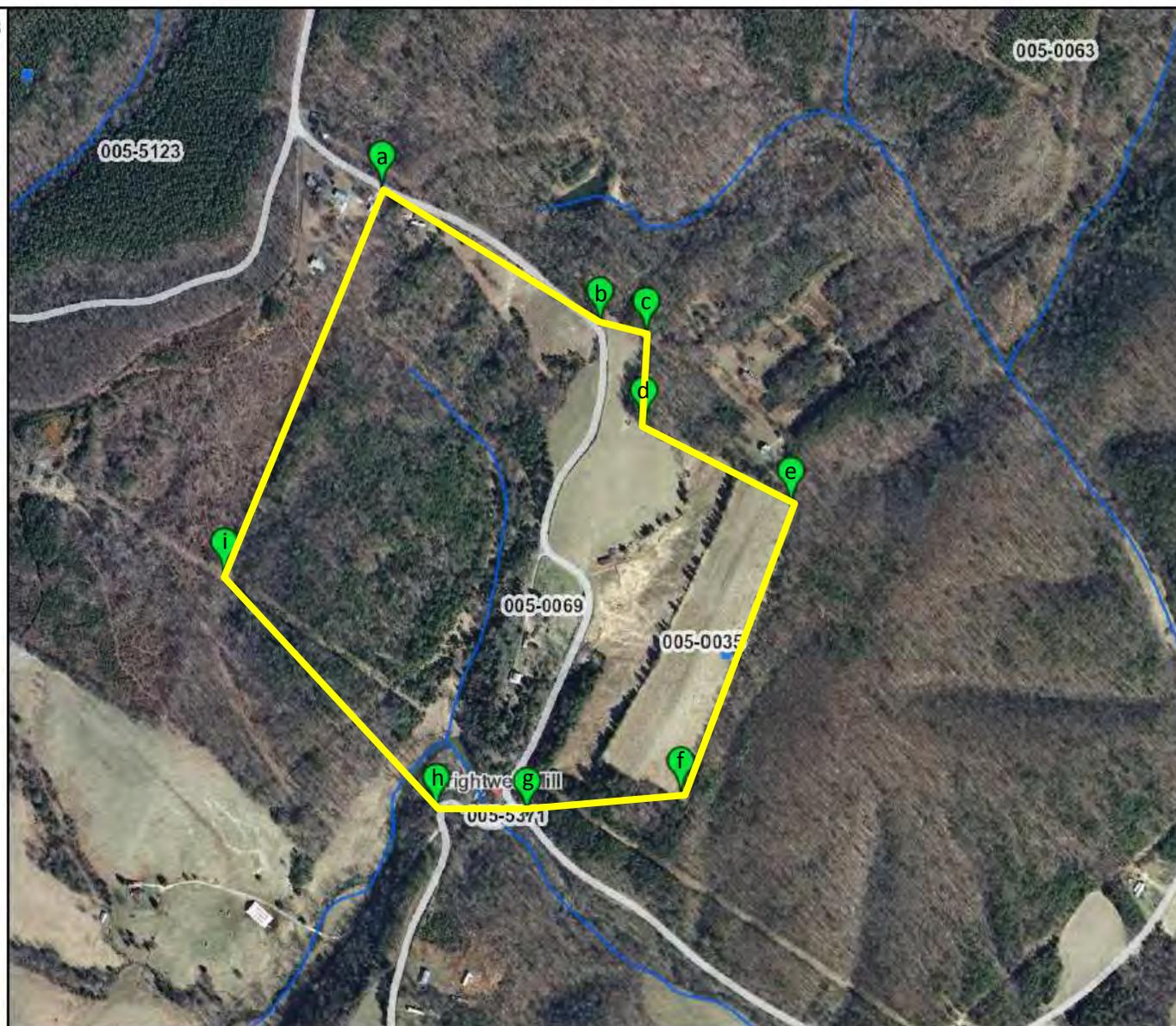
Polygon lat/long coordinates:

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b.	37.275077N	79.024531W
c.	37.375034N	79.024276W
d.	37.274648N	79.024292W
e.	37.274302N	79.023496W
f.	37.273051N	79.024090W
g.	37.272962N	79.024929W
h.	37.272980N	79.025423W
i.	37.273998N	79.030578W



Feet

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1:10,000 / 1"=833 Feet



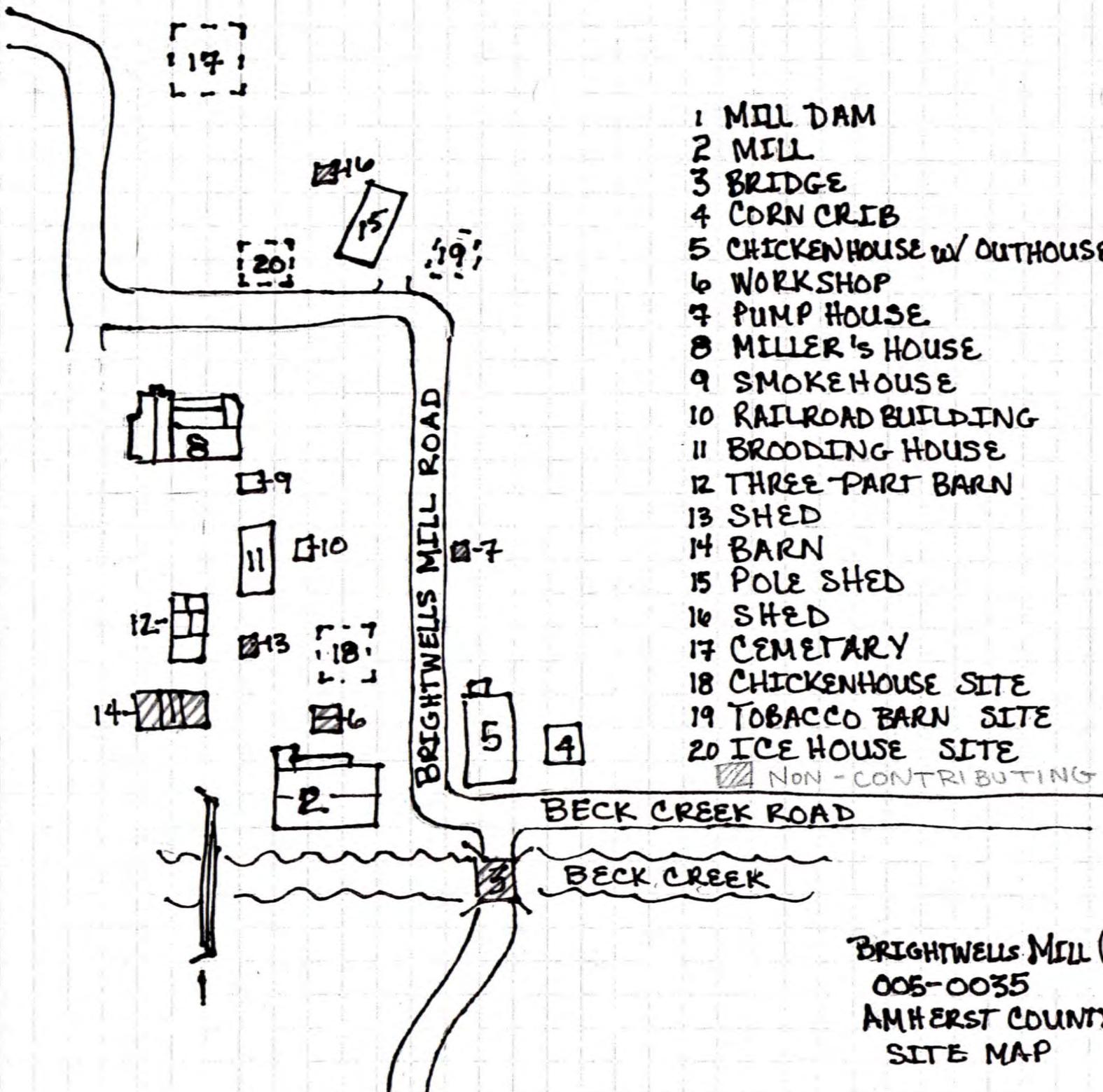
Title: Brightwells Mill Complex (005-0035) Amherst County, VA

Date: 1/18/2016

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.

N
↑
NOT TO SCALE



- 1 MILL DAM
- 2 MILL
- 3 BRIDGE
- 4 CORN CRIB
- 5 CHICKENHOUSE w/ OUTHOUSE
- 6 WORKSHOP
- 7 PUMP HOUSE
- 8 MILLER'S HOUSE
- 9 SMOKEHOUSE
- 10 RAILROAD BUILDING
- 11 BROODING HOUSE
- 12 THREE-PART BARN
- 13 SHED
- 14 BARN
- 15 POLE SHED
- 16 SHED
- 17 CEMETARY
- 18 CHICKENHOUSE SITE
- 19 TOBACCO BARN SITE
- 20 ICE HOUSE SITE

▨ NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE

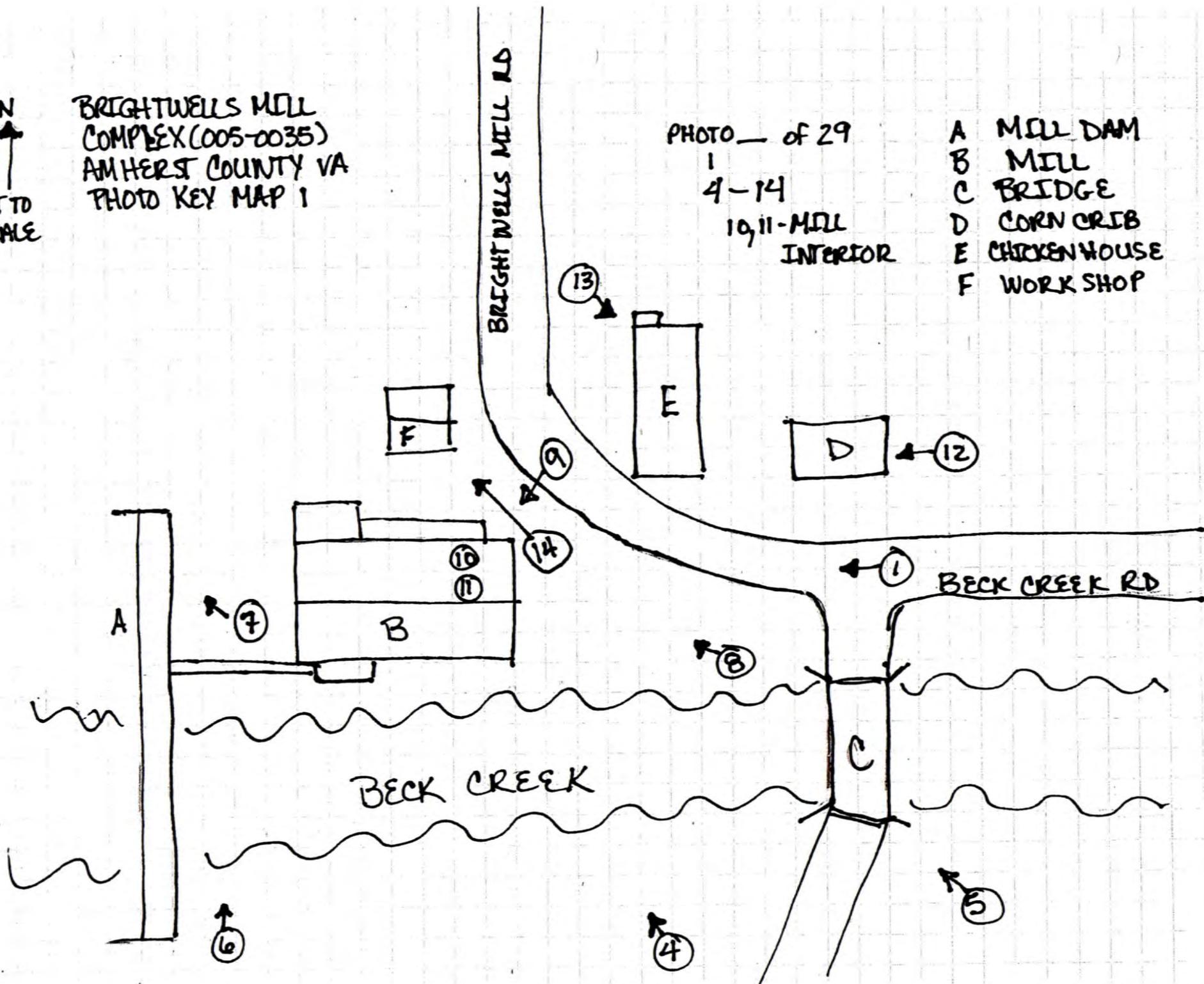
BRIGHTWELLS MILL COMPLEX
005-0035
AMHERST COUNTY VA
SITE MAP

N
↑
NOT TO
SCALE

BRIGHTWELLS MILL
COMPLEX (005-0035)
AMHERST COUNTY VA
PHOTO KEY MAP 1

PHOTO — of 29
1
4-14
1911-MILL
INTERIOR

A MILL DAM
B MILL
C BRIDGE
D CORN CRIB
E CHICKENHOUSE
F WORK SHOP

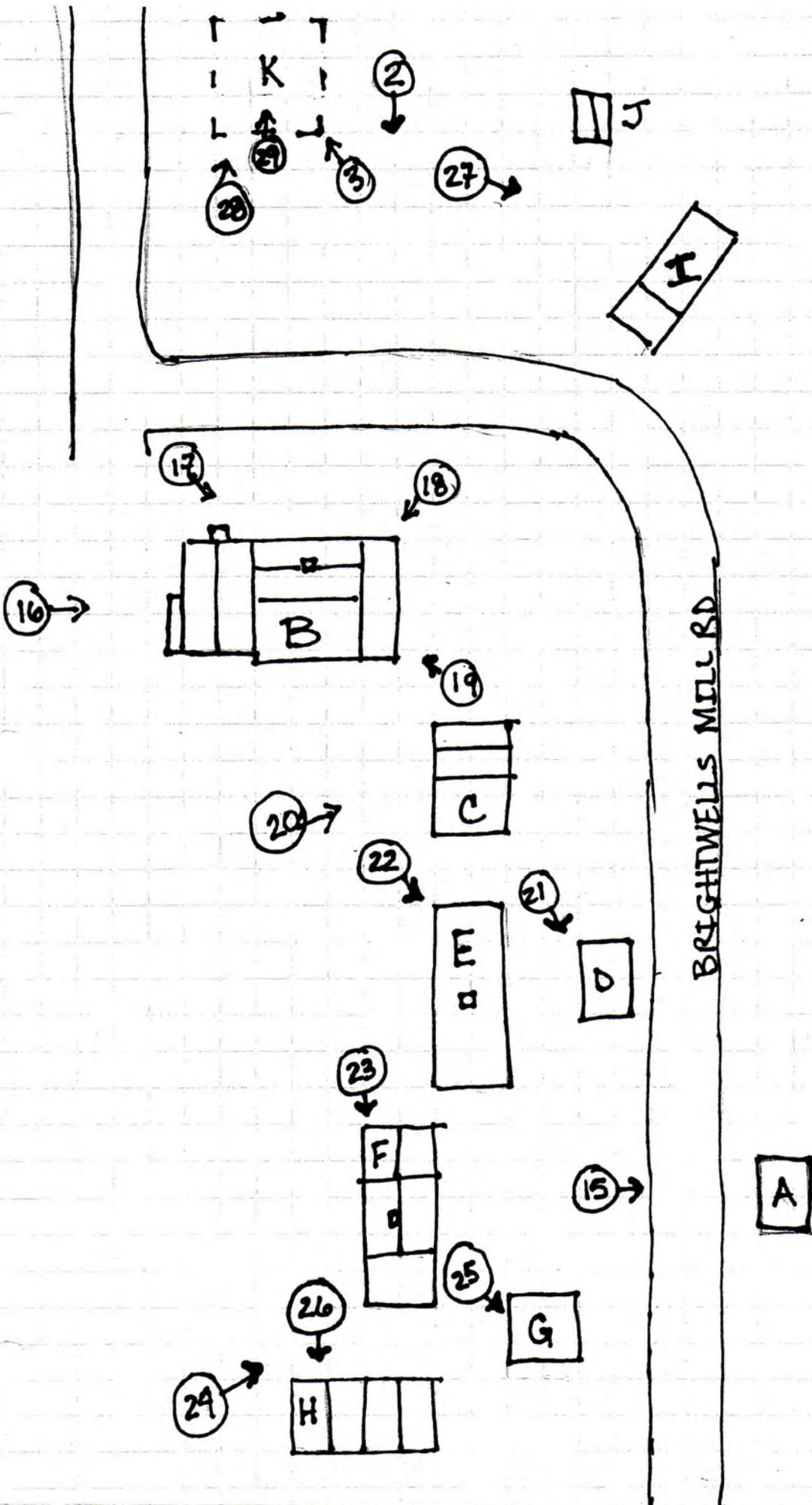


N
↑
NOT TO
SCALE

BRIGHTWELLS MILL
COMPLEX (005-0035)
AMHERST COUNTY VA
PHOTO KEY MAP 2

- A PUMPHOUSE
- B MILLER'S HOUSE
- C SMOKEHOUSE
- D RAILROAD BLDG
- E BROODING HOUSE
- F THREE-PART BARN
- G SHED
- H BARN
- I POLE SHED
- J SHED
- K CEMETERY

PHOTO - of 29
2, 3
15-29



The Brightwells Mill Complex property
is found on parts of four tax maps
It is listed as 150 A 35 having 110.6 acres

TAX PARCEL MAP
Brightwell's Mill Complex
Amherst County, VA
DHR No. 005-0035

