



**North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
State Historic Preservation Office**

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Roy Cooper  
Secretary Susi H. Hamilton

Office of Archives and History  
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

July 2, 2019

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Vanessa Patrick  
Human Environment Unit  
NC Department of Transportation

**FROM:** Renee Gledhill-Earley *Renee Gledhill-Earley*  
Environmental Review Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** Historic Structures Survey Report for BR-0121, Replace Bridge 178 on SR 1804  
over Sevenmile Swamp, Sampson County, ER 19-1974

Thank you for your June 12, 2019, memorandum transmitting the above-referenced report. We have reviewed the report and concur that the House-Autry Mill (SP0414) is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for the reasons outlined in the report.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-814-6579 or [environmental.review@ncdcr.gov](mailto:environmental.review@ncdcr.gov). In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

**cc:** Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

JAMES H. TROGDON, III  
SECRETARY

**ER 19-1974**

To: Renee Gledhill-Earley

From: Vanessa E. Patrick

Due -- 7/8/19

Date: June 12, 2019

H- ~~2/20~~ 6/20/19

Subject: *House-Autry Mill (SP0414) National Register Eligibility.  
TIP No. BR-0121, WBS No. 67121.1.1. Bridge No. 178  
Replacement, Sampson County.*

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The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 178, built in 1962 and carrying SR 1804 (House's Mill Road) over Sevenmile Swamp, about four miles southwest of Newton Grove in Sampson County (see attached maps and aerials). Along the western side of the project area stands the House-Autry Mill (SP0414) complex, established in the early nineteenth century as House's Mill, expanded both commercially and physically during the twentieth century, and in operation until about 2000. The original mill building sits approximately one-hundred (100) feet directly west of Bridge No. 178 on the earthen dam that created House's Pond further to the west and transformed Sevenmile Swamp into the mill race. Growth and modernization of the mill, largely during the second half of the twentieth century, added the surrounding grain bins, conveyors, elevators, and other components to the property, as well as necessitated changes to the earlier building. The House-Autry Mill is the only resource of possible significance in the Bridge No. 178 project area.\* The project is state-funded, but requires a Federal (United States Army Corps of Engineers) permit and thus a consideration of the mill's eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NR) under the provisions of Section 106.

Built by William House in 1812 and owned by several generations of his descendants, House's Mill ground corn, and for a time also wheat and rice, for the residents of northwestern Sampson County. Like most grist mills, it also became a community meeting place, a role it fulfilled well into the twentieth century. The mill pond, too, provided recreational opportunities, principally fishing. Electrified in 1947, the mill nevertheless continued to use traditional stones, as observed by architectural historian Tom Butchko in 1979. House's Mill merged with the Autry Brothers Mill Company in 1967 and operated thereafter as the House-Autry Mill. Members of the House family managed the mill following the merger, but eventually sold the property to House-Autry

Mills, Inc. in the 1980s. In 2001, the company relocated to a new facility in Four Oaks, Johnston County. The mill property returned to House family ownership in 2004, though it no longer serves its original purpose.\*\*

House's Mill is a two-story, gable-roofed building of frame construction, approximately forty (40) feet by sixty (60) feet in dimension (see attached photographs). Its gable ends are oriented towards the existing bridge (east) and the mill pond (west). Sometime after the initial construction, the north and south sides of the building appear to have been extended, enclosed, and shed-roofed. Circular-sawn wooden weatherboards and composition shingles, as well as (relatively recent) standing-seam metal roofing and guttering replace earlier materials. Visible sections of the foundation reveal a mix of concrete block and square, dimensional wooden posts; sluice gates and other elements of the water-power mechanism are not discernable. The fenestration is irregular and clearly dates to varying periods of alteration. Severe storms during the past two years have demolished several of the auxiliary structures, damaged others including the original mill, and created a debris field to either side of the race near the mill building. This obstacle, as well as the obvious structural instability of the mill itself, precluded interior inspection. It is, however, evident that the braced, heavy frame documented during the county architectural survey in 1979 remains essentially intact, likely the only unaltered, unreplaced fabric in the building.\*\*\*

The Sampson County grain mills that survived into the twentieth century generally were altered or rebuilt. Two of the survivors – the Stacy Crumpler Mill (SP0513) and the Rob Crumpler Mill (SP0512) – are associated with a local family of millers and mill builders/renovators at work during the early decades of the new century (see attached photographs). The siting and form of both buildings is typical of early mills in the county, as well as those rehabilitated or even built anew in later years. Constructed on top of a dam where pond meets race, the mills are essentially tall, rectangular, wooden boxes, gabled and plainly finished. While originally conforming to this traditional, persistent design, House's Mill eventually experienced greater changes to its massing, materials, and surroundings than apparently any other mill in Sampson County. Architectural responses to new production and marketing possibilities transformed a community mill into a more regionally oriented entity and suggest that the site might be significant under Criterion A for its place in commercial and industrial history. To the extent that the physical evolution of the property is characteristic of such transformations, significance under Criterion C also might be argued. The case for eligibility under Criteria A and C seems less defensible when Criteria B and D are considered. While the House family certainly achieved a measure of economic success in Sampson County, their contributions, like those of their neighbors, derive from their occupational group rather than any uniquely individual attribute. House-Autry Mills, Inc. acquired other established mill buildings, like the 1907 Webb's Mill (NS0316) near Spring Hope in Nash County, and developed their sites to suit mid-twentieth century production needs. The auxiliary buildings added to the mill properties are types widely employed at a variety of agricultural sites, and the technologies used to create them, as well as the alterations of the older buildings and even the original framing of House's Mill, are well

documented and understood. Thus clearly not eligible under Criteria B and D, the House-Autry Mill also appears rather less exceptional under Criteria A and C.\*\*\*\*

Perhaps not surprisingly, the degree of historical integrity currently displayed by the House-Autry Mill proves decisive in determining its National Register eligibility. For most of its existence House's Mill appeared much as the Stacy Crumpler Mill does today, though somewhat larger in scale. It does retain its integrity of location, and the mill pond and race are vestiges of its historic setting, feeling, and association. The latter three qualities, however, are compromised principally by the later additions to the site and also by the changes imposed on the traditional form of the mill building. Besides its siting, the most notable element of the mill is its surviving framing, hidden by layers of alterations that greatly diminish integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. It is instructive that Webb's Mill (NS0316), like House's Mill corporately expanded in the later twentieth century, is study-listed, no doubt because the original building exhibits minimal exterior changes and the site is less burdened with later structures than its Sampson County equivalent. A consistent finding for the Vann-Boney Mill (SP0139) in Sampson County found that it is not eligible due to its rebuilding in the 1930s. As the House-Autry Mill has lost considerable historical integrity, we recommend that it be considered not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

While not determinants of National Register eligibility, recently available design plans and permit information provide additional project context. Bridge No. 178 will be replaced along the existing alignment, the already established crossing of the mill race. The attached details illustrate that the proposed construction will be confined almost entirely to the existing right-of-way and impose no direct impacts on the original mill building. Similarly, the permit area does not extend beyond the right-of-way on the west side of the bridge. The project is fast approaching its let date, so we will greatly appreciate anything that can be done to expedite review. Please let me know if you require any additional information. Thank you for considering our recommendation.

V. E. P.

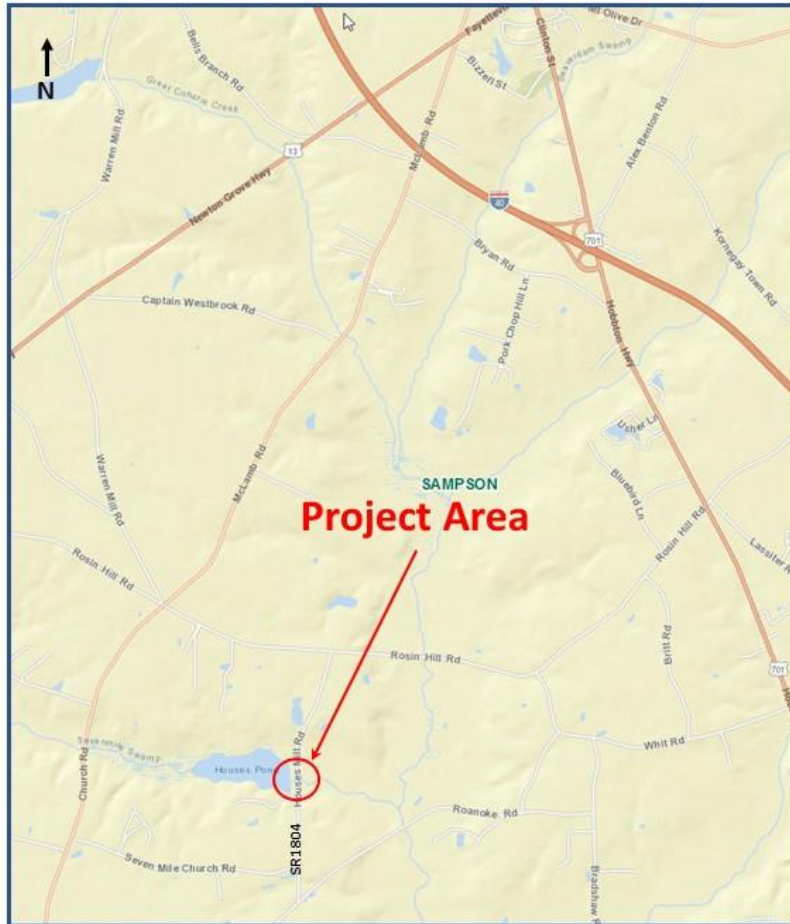
Copies to: Greg Purvis, Wetherill Engineering  
Mason Herndon, NCDOT – Division 3  
Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT – EAU-Historic Architecture

\*Bridge No. 178 is not NR-eligible, as it is neither aesthetically, nor technologically significant.

\*\*This brief history of the House-Autry Mill property is drawn from: Thomas R. Butchko, *An Inventory of Historic Architecture, Sampson County, North Carolina* (City of Clinton, NC, 19[81] and Survey Site Form, House-Autry Mill (SP0414), on file North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NCHPO); Ben McDonald, “Old Mill Still Grinding Away,” *News and Observer [Raleigh]* 17 October 1954; “Our History” at [www.house-autryfoodservice.com/history/](http://www.house-autryfoodservice.com/history/); and Sampson County Deed Books, especially DB 997, pp. 628-633 (September 1, 1981), DB 1084, pp. 640-641 (February 27, 1989), and DB 1560, pp. 457-459 (October 14, 2004).

\*\*\*Site visit May 15, 2019 -- photographs on file NCDOT – Historic Architecture. Structural investigation also informed by Tom Butchko’s 1979 survey notes and photographs and 2016 aerial footage by Dennis Johnson ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6QHjZ1unOk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6QHjZ1unOk)).

\*\*\*\*”Industrial Architectural Development” in the Sampson County Multiple Resource Nomination, Tom Butchko and Jim Sumner, 1985 on file NCHPO. Butchko, *An Inventory of Historic Architecture, Sampson County, North Carolina*. John Perrell, “Nash County’s Last Working Mill,” *The Nashville Graphic* 25 May 1994.



BR-0121 Bridge No. 178 Replacement Sampson County  
WBS No. 67121.1.1 Base map: HPOWeb, nts





**House-Autry Mill (SP0414). House's Mill Road (SR 1804).**

PINs: 19049244106, 19049244107,  
19049244102, and 19111532016.  
Base map: Current Sampson County GIS, nts



Sampson County Soil Map, 1926 (U.S. Department of Agriculture).  
Mill dam is clearly delineated at the eastern end of House's Pond.  
Viewed at: <https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps>.



House-Autry Mill (SP0414) Looking North.  
From Dennis Johnson footage, June 30, 2016, viewed at  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6QHjZ1unOk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6QHjZ1unOk).





House-Autry Mill. Looking west from near Bridge No. 178 (above) and towards east and south elevations (below). May 2019.





House-Autry Mill. Detail, south side of east elevation (above) and east side of south elevation (below). May 2019.







House-Autry Mill. Interior views of framing members and later materials. Sampson County Survey, Tom Butchko, 1979.





Stacy Crumpler Mill (SP0513) (above) and Rob Crumpler Mill (SP0512) (below). While both buildings have experienced varying degrees of renovation, they illustrate the characteristic siting and form employed for water-powered grain mills in the Sampson County region. Like House's Mill, the Stacy Crumpler Mill retains some elements of its circa-1800 framing. May 2019.







Webb's Mill (NS0316). Built in 1907, acquired by House-Autry Mills, Inc. in the 1980s, and ceased operation in 1994. Placed on the North Carolina State Study List.

From footage by Mark Cone for the *Southern Nash News*, April 2017, viewed at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl104bowqZ0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl104bowqZ0).

