

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Richfield Milling Company**

Richfield, Stanly County, ST0098, Listed 9/19/2016

Nomination by Jon Palmer

Photographs by Jon Palmer, September 2015



Overall view



Rear view

**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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Richfield Milling Company

Other names/site number: Spring Roller Mill

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: 303 South Main Street

City or town: Richfield State: North Carolina NC County: Stanly

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

## 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:

    A          B      X C          D

<p><b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p> <p><u>North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources</u></p> <p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p> <p>_____</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <u>   </u> meets <u>   </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p><b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Title :</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS: Vacant

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Heavy timber mill construction

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

CONCRETE: Foundation

WOOD: Weatherboard walls

METAL: Roof

### 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.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Richfield Milling Company is located in Richfield, Stanly County, North Carolina. Comprised of a three-story, heavy-timber main mill structure, a connected wood-frame one-story warehouse, and a detached metal grain silo, Richfield Milling Company stands on a rectangular 0.81-acre tax parcel at 303 South Main Street. The property is level along the street, with a slight rise in elevation to the rear. The Richfield Milling Company is surrounded by open, flat land on three sides and across Main Street to the west, allowing for an open, rural feeling to the property.

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### Narrative Description

#### Setting

The Richfield Milling Company Roller Mill is located two blocks southwest of the intersection of Main Street and Church Street/Highway 52. The mill sits on the east side of South Main Street, facing northwest and parallel to the street. The mill structure sits

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approximately thirty-five feet back from the road, and is located at the northern end of the tax parcel.

Primarily level, the property has a slight rise in slope to the rear, or southeast, of the mill structure, and the land continues to rise through the adjacent property to South Cemetery Street farther to the southeast. Several houses are located to the northwest on Lee Street, and there is a house southwest of the subject property. The Richfield Baptist Church is across Lee Street to the southwest. Mill Street is approximately 65-feet to the northeast, and modern commercial buildings are located to the northeast, between the mill and Highway 52.

The Norfolk Southern railway line is located one block to the northeast and runs south of, and parallel with, Highway 52. Traces of a removed railroad spur track towards the northwest that once served the Richfield Milling Company, and terminated directly opposite the mill structure across South Main Street, can still be seen.

#### **Richfield Milling Company Roller Mill, circa 1910, circa ca. 1960 addition**

The Richfield Milling Company mill is comprised of a three-story heavy-timber and frame building built around 1910; an attached wood-framed single-story space erected around ca. 1960 on the northeast end of the mill; and on the east elevation, a two-story wood frame extension with simple shed roof on the main mill building, and a one-story frame addition on the ca.1960 building. Both framed building extensions are deteriorated. There is a detached metal silo on a circular concrete pad approximately tghirty-two feet to the southwest. Approximately four feet to the northwest of the standing silo is another concrete pad of the same size, indicating that at one time there was a pair of grain silos. The narrow, vertical wood-framed grain elevator with low-slope metal gable roof that originally sat atop the main mill building now sits on the ground behind the mill.

Ca. 1960 photographs, as well as 1984 and 1990 survey photos, show a deep shed-roof canopy the full length of the three-story building extended toward Main Street. It was secured back to the main building with metal cables. This canopy provided covered loading and delivery for trucks bringing grain, etc. to the mill. Today the canopy is gone but the cables are still attached to the front façade. The shallow loading dock depicted in these photos, located under the canopy and running across the main building is also gone. These photograph also show a two-story wood-frame, weatherboard-sided structure was attached to the south wall of the mill. The gable-roof 'ghost' of this structure can be seen in the mill's south elevation's painted weatherboards. Portions of the bases of the concrete and brick foundation walls of the now-missing building are still intact.

#### **Exterior**

The three-story, side-gabled metal roof, heavy-timber four-bay wide, 2 bays deep building was built circa 1910. Dimensional wood-stud framed walls infill between the sawn heavy timber members of the exterior walls. Diagonal exterior sheathing is beneath the lapped horizontal wood siding; a majority of the original sheathing boards remain, however there are areas of repair that have occurred, with the new sheathing matching the existing adjacent. A metal roof tops the main building.

The frame grain elevator structure was removed from the main building in 2010. It stands southwest of the main building. This rectangular structure straddled the roof ridge, and had wood sash windows with a 2-over-2 lite configuration on the west and east walls. One window is still intact; the other window is missing but the surround is intact. The grain elevator is fifteen feet high, with horizontal weatherboards over wood stud framing, and the metal

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roof sits atop exposed rafters with rafter tails visible in the overhang. The current owner intends to return the grain elevator to its original position atop the mill's roof.

An attached, one-story, side-gabled metal roof, wood-stud framed building extends from the northeast elevation, and the north end of the southeast elevation of the main mill structure. This building was built circa ca. 1960 and provided office, storage and warehouse space, as well as a covered area to park two delivery vehicles. The rear of this building extends one bay beyond the main mill structure to the southeast, and this back portion has a simple shed metal roof that engages the main roof. The front or northwest elevation of the attached building presents one half of its length boarded up over wood framing and brick foundation. The covered loading area is open to the street, with temporary shoring members and a narrow loading dock visible at the rear of the space. The northeast elevation shows a faux-brick printed building paper over horizontal wood siding and three window openings with their surrounds intact but the sashes missing. The east elevation has weatherboard siding, two windows with their surrounds intact but their sashes are missing, and a door opening. The southern end of the building has visibly failed, with structure and building elements sagging from plumb. Exposed rafter tails make the overhang for the metal roof.

There is a two-story storage building attached to the southeastern end of the main mill building. It is a wood-framed, weatherboard sided structure with metal shed roof. Ca. 1960 photographs show outside steps to an interior floor and siding on the mill building. The building is fourteen feet deep and twenty-three feet wide, with the partial framing of a center opening remaining. The building has experienced severe weathering and deterioration, and sections of the framing and walls have started to collapse. No interior floor remains. Horizontal wood plank walls extend up to the metal roof panels.

The northwest elevation is the main façade of the three-story mill. In the northernmost bay at the third floor are two metal signs, one for the "Richfield Milling Co., Inc.," and below it is the Purina checkerboard trademark logo. The fenestration pattern is a four-bay arrangement. Doors and windows alternate on the first level, and three window openings are on the two floors above. Wood sash windows were removed and are in storage until they can be repaired and reused. They are a 2-over-2 lite configuration. The main door in the second bay is a double-leaf, wood four-paneled door; the second door in the south bay is a single-leaf door. Window openings on the first two levels are covered or boarded up. The south bay has an exterior wood chute that connects to the interior grain bins. There are no exterior windows above the single leaf door on the main level. At the north end of the façade, the warehouse/office/vehicle addition extends forward from the main mill building. Historically there was a pedestrian door that provided access from the main building's loading dock into the office area via this offset in the addition. The north half of the elevation is the open, recessed, covered parking area. A raised wooden loading dock is at the rear of this space. There are areas on the façade where missing diagonal sheathing has been replaced with new sheathing to match in orientation, sizing, and profile. This sheathing will be covered with weatherboard siding.

The northeast gable-end of the one story ca. 1960 warehouse/office/loading dock addition has an engaged shed-roof covering the rear portion of the warehouse area. Two window openings are within the northeast gable wall. The wooden sashes are missing and historic photographs show that they were a 2 over 2-over-2 lite configuration. There is a single sash, divided lite window towards the east end of the elevation. Above this structure, the top two levels of the mill are visible. There are two metal signs identical to those on the façade, with a third sign for "Purina Chows". The "Purina Chows" sign is severely weathered. The gable-end wall reflects the two-bay interior plan in both the building depth and the exterior window placement. Each floor has two window openings and nearly all of the sashes have not survived. The gable-end projecting eave and soffit have simple brackets located along the

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rake of the eaves, and there is a single-sash, divided-lite window located just below the eave peak.

The southeast/rear elevation of the mill comprises the connected single story warehouse structure to the north, the main three-story mill building, and the two-story rear projection on the south. There are two building extensions: a single-story, one-bay wide metal shed-roof structure that extends south of the warehouse building, and a two-story, one-bay deep metal shed-roof structure on the southern end of the mill. Historic photographs show trucks pulled up to this two-story extension. Rafter tails are on all the extensions. The south structure is a framed 2-by-6-inch wood stud structure, with lapped horizontal siding on the exterior and horizontal plank siding as the interior finish. Sill and foundation failure is evident at both additions along this elevation, with extensive deterioration of siding and framing members visible. The center of the warehouse structure façade has two windows and an egress door, and immediately adjacent is a small projection with a window. A small window is located at the southernmost corner of the warehouse structure. There is a space approximately fifteen-feet in length between the two building expansions, and the three stories of the mill are visible. Much of the mill's diagonal sheathing and weatherboard siding is missing within this space, and the infill framing is visible, along with the temporary plywood sheathing installed on the interior.

The two concrete pads to the detached metal silos sit thirty-two feet to the south of the mill. There is one standing silo remaining, with a metal support tower and transfer auger mechanism. Only a concrete pad for the other silo is still evident.

With the grain bins on the interior of the southwest end of the mill building, there are no exterior windows. A large opening in the center of the first floor (currently boarded up) suggests interior access once existed between the main mill structure and a now-gone one-story wing on the south wall. Interviews with Joyce Ross, John Fisher, and Bonnie Smith of the Fisher family who owned and operated the Richfield Milling Company from 1934-1990 indicated there were large wooden bins for grain storage located here, and that it had a roof covering. Historic photographs indicate a more substantial structure than that described by the Fisher family. Little else has been uncovered about this area. Areas of missing siding and/or diagonal sheathing are visible, with some sheathing having been replaced with new to match original adjacent in orientation, sizing, and profile. The gable-end projecting eave and soffit have simple brackets located along the rake of the eaves, and there is a single-sash, divided-lite window located just below the eave peak. Immediately below the eave window is a pair of metal signs, the Purina "checkerboard" trademark logo with "Purina Chows" above it. Two metal pipes hang from the side of the facade at the third floor; these pipes would have been connected to the silo support towers to transfer grain from the silos to the interior bins. Now they are disconnected and hang down. The south wall of the east projection has lost much of its siding and the stud construction is exposed.

### **Interior**

Richfield Milling Company's heavy-timber construction creates a two-bay deep by four-bay wide open-plan on the first floor of the mill structure. It has exposed stud wall framing; heavy wood plank flooring set on a diagonal throughout, exposed timber posts and beams, and open joist ceilings. Several pieces of mill equipment are still in place, including the outflow pipes of the interior grain bins, pulley belt countershafts and a driving spindle, and wood-sided chutes. Post-to-beam connections include both cushion blocks and timber braces. In the main mill building, there is no sheathing material on the walls - the heavy timber, stud framing, and diagonal exterior sheathing are all visible. In the circa ca. 1960 addition, the majority of the walls are exposed studs with the weatherboards visible beyond; in the southernmost section of the building, there is a remaining area of finished wood

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sheathing on the interior, indicating that at one time at least sections of the addition outer walls were finished.

The mill building sits atop a basement level, dug down below grade for a clear height from floor to bottom of floor joists of eight feet two inches, and which originally housed the pulley system and motors that ran the machinery on the floors above. The basement has a concrete floor, with formed concrete foundation walls that extend to four feet above the finished floor. The remaining 50-inches is framed by a 6-by-12-inch sill beam and 12-by-12-inch post and beam with framed infill. The interior heavy timber posts are full height, but sit on raised concrete slabs. Research has not indicated the foundation has been added to or changed over the years, and the foundation walls appear to be original. When the current owner purchased the building, much of the top few inches of concrete and the sills were damaged and deteriorated. The entire main building was lifted up a few inches in order to repair the foundation walls. The damaged concrete was repaired and a treated 2-by-12-inch sill plate was put on top. The old sills that were in good enough condition were then replaced with new 6-by-12 inch sills installed to replicate the original. All of the original post and beams that was salvageable was reused, the rest being replaced with like products and construction to match the original joinery and craftsmanship. Once all the repairs were made the building was set back down.

On the main floor, there are two wide openings between the main mill and the ca. 1960 addition, one located in the front office area and the other, in the same bay of the mill, at the rear L-shaped area.

All window openings are visible but boarded up. At the south end of the building where the four wood-sided grain bins are located, the bottom metal outflow pipes of the grain bins are located at ceiling level, and the stepped inverted-pyramids of the bin bottoms are exposed. Wood used in the grain bin construction appears to be both 2-by-2 and 2-by-4 inch members.

The crawlspace to the front office portion of the ca. 1960 addition is visible from the covered vehicle parking bays, and new interior foundation concrete block piers have been laid. Consequently, flooring in this portion of the addition is level and stable, with the floor comprised of heavy plank flooring set on a diagonal. The majority of the flooring in the warehouse portion of the ca. 1960 addition is intact, though some sagging has occurred, and there is a line of load bearing posts located along the transition point where the gable roof ties into the shed roof slope of the rear warehouse space. Unlike the diagonal flooring in the office portion, the warehouse wood flooring is laid in a straight pattern. Just north of the exterior door and extending south to the end of the rear L-shaped space, the exterior has visibly sagged and the interior foundation and flooring system has failed, leaving this interior section open to the crawlspace below where it meets the main mill building.

While there is a large rectangular opening in the ceiling against the northeast wall that could have held a stair, there is currently no stair to the mill's second floor - access is by ladder through one of the equipment openings in the ceiling.

On the mill's second floor, the flooring extends to the southern bay, where the stacked wood walls of the grain bins rise up. Several temporary 2-by-6-inch stud support walls are in place around the interior, providing support where the ceiling/floor has been cut and removed. All building components are exposed and identical to the first floor. Window openings are visible, but boarded up. There is a narrow wooden dog-leg stair in the northern corner, with closed risers and simple hand rail that connects the second and third floors, with the outer riser having been cut to accommodate a section of chute. There is a large, approximately 10-foot diameter circular opening, cut into the ceiling in the eastern end of the second bay; and the ceiling is almost entirely missing from the third bay immediately adjacent to the grain bins.

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On the mill's third floor, flooring at both the circular opening and the third bay to the south has been removed; elsewhere, the wood flooring is laid straight and perpendicular to the mill's long axis. The tops of the open south-end grain bins are visible, and end approximately forty-two inches above the finished floor. There is a narrow, raised wood plank walkway that starts at the exterior wall by the first bin in the south, and extends to the middle heavy timber post.

Two separate, open wood stairs lead up to different platform areas, with the center platform being below where the rooftop grain elevator would have been located in the third bay to the south. All window openings are open on this level, and screened. Open wood trusses frame the gable roof, with wood roof rafters and decking above.

### **Grain Silo, circa ca. 1960**

Located approximately thirty-two feet from the southeast corner of the main mill building, this metal tower silo with conical metal cap still stands alongside its support tower, catwalk, and transfer auger chute. These metal tubes have been disconnected, with the two halves now hanging independent of each other. A narrow metal ladder accesses the roof.

### **Integrity Assessment**

The Richfield Milling Co., Inc. was in continuous operation from 1910 until it closed in 1990, at which time it changed hands through several owners and experienced the accelerated deterioration and weathering any unused structure undergoes. The grain elevator, atop the mill as recently as 2010, now sits on the ground behind the structure. While the grain elevator is no longer in its original position, it is still on site, still salvageable, and the roof framing still in place to accept its re-attachment. The current owner intends to put the grain elevator back in its original location.

The seamed metal roof of the ca. 1960 addition is missing in sections, exposing the roof nailing strips below. The addition to the south of the mill, evident in historic photographs, is now gone. Only one of the two metal silos still stands. Every elevation has weatherboard siding that has deteriorated or is missing, with the diagonal sheathing beneath exposed. The rear elevation has a section of wall where both siding and sheathing are missing, and the addition in the southeast corner appears to be in imminent danger of collapse. The front and silo-side end elevation present sections where the sheathing, presumably already missing or extensively deteriorated, has been replaced with new material.

When the Richfield Milling Company property was purchased by CulpFaust, LLC in 2011, the building's deterioration had steadily progressed, and the need to intervene in its stabilization was paramount. The basement-level structural system, including main heavy timber vertical posts, sills, and foundations were all deteriorated. The entire main building was raised so that the poured concrete foundations and heavy timber foundation members could be repaired and/or replaced as their condition warranted. All new members match the original adjacent in material, sizing, and joint detailing. The building was then lowered back down and secured to its foundation.

The new sheathing, while obviously different in age from the historic, adjacent material, was installed to be in keeping with the historic profile, size, and orientation. The front northwest corner structure of the warehouse had failed and fallen in, and now has new framing, sections of seamed metal roof, and simple plywood sheathing to wrap this area.

The structural interventions and sheathing replacement undertaken have been to stabilize and secure a historical property of significance that was, and still is, in jeopardy. Temporary

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walls and plywood sheathing are not end-results, but a necessary part of the process of shoring and rehabilitation. Much of the foundation and sheathing work undertaken - and done so with care and an eye for the original quality and appearance - will ultimately never be seen.

Even in its deteriorated condition, the Richfield Milling Company building retains its historic character and the distinctive function and purpose of its original use through its rural setting, extant materials, layout, quality of workmanship, and visual presence.

Further, the current owner wants to pursue the building's rehabilitation in an informed and sensitive manner consistent with the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service's Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

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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

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

circa 1910  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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 circa 1910 Richfield Milling Company roller mill in Richfield, North Carolina achieves architectural significance through its integrity, design and character defining materials, including poured concrete foundation walls, heavy-timber structural frame, wood frame infill sheathing and exterior weatherboards, height and massing, grain elevator, interior wood grain bins and remaining grain-handling machinery components - all iconic features of early twentieth century heavy-timber roller mill construction. It therefore

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meets National Register Criterion C for architecture. The property's period of significance is its construction date circa 1910.

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

**Historical Background/Richfield Milling Company History**

Stanly County is located in south central North Carolina, within the Piedmont Plateau, and on the southeastern edge of the heavily industrialized Piedmont Crescent. It was originally part of New Hanover and Montgomery counties, and in 1841 was created as a new county by the General Assembly and named after John Stanly, an early state legislator and United States Congressman. <sup>[1]</sup>

Through the late nineteenth century, the county had no towns of substantial size. As settlement proceeded, the self-sufficient farmstead was the nuclear economic and social unit. Dispersed buildings on the rural landscape served as villages and towns, with the mill and general store serving as centers of social life and commerce. Milling was an essential industry: the horizontally-mounted water-powered wheel of the county's early grist mills provided farmers with a means to grind wheat and corn, and sawmills dressed the timber used to build homes and buildings. In some instances, the miller would combine the grist mill and sawmill operations. <sup>[2]</sup>

Agriculture has been predominant throughout the county's history, and by the late nineteenth century small towns and villages, including Richfield, served as important trading centers. Agriculture centered on wheat, corn, cotton, dairy, poultry, eggs, vegetables, fruits, pork and beef. According to the 1910 census, corn occupied a larger acreage than any other crop; grown chiefly for subsistence and feed for farm work stock, it was also sold for cash at local mills. <sup>[3]</sup>

The Town of Richfield began as a settlement of German immigrants in the late 1800s. The community was originally called Ritchie's Field, named for the Ritchie (Richter) family who founded it. <sup>[4]</sup> The Ritchie family laid out the streets, which ran one half mile in every direction from the square, located at the current intersection of Main Street and Highway 52. The town was chartered as Ritchie's Mill in 1890.

The Albemarle Branch of the Yadkin Railroad was originally conceived in 1871, but it was not until the Richmond & Danville Railroad purchased the stock of the Yadkin Railroad that construction began in 1890. The railroad was completed between Salisbury, county seat for Rowan County, and Norwood in southern Stanly County in 1891, with Richfield being one of the multiple stops between the larger, thriving developed centers of Salisbury and Albemarle, the county seat. In 1894 the Richmond & Danville Railroad was sold and became the core of the Southern Railway. The Yadkin Railroad, in turn, became a subsidiary of Southern Railway. <sup>[5]</sup>

The railroad provided the means for growth of manufacturing enterprises and the incentive to increase agricultural production, and to import steam-powered machinery into the backcountry. Since it was not dependent upon water

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power, and therefore independent of waterways, steam-powered equipment made the rural crossroads community possible. Crossroad communities became thriving centers of rural commerce and industry. <sup>[6]</sup>

In September of 1893 Ritchie's Mill got a new post office and a new name: Richfield. <sup>[7]</sup> The Ritchie family built the first store in the area; members of the Ritchie family later established a sawmill, a roller mill, a general store and post office, and a cotton gin. Richfield became a thriving community and a prosperous farming center, with a school that employed two teachers, a shirt factory, a casket manufacturer, livery stables, and a drug store. The town was served by both a physician and a dentist. <sup>[8]</sup> It was incorporated in 1908. <sup>[9]</sup>

Richfield's first roller mill was built in 1892 by Monroe, Julius, and Cicero Ritchie. <sup>[10]</sup> One of the mill's employees, Mike Pence, left the company and built his own mill. <sup>[11]</sup> It was a smaller structure several hundred feet northwest of the Richfield Milling Company mill. It was later converted to a shirt factory and owned by the Ritchie family. <sup>[12]</sup>

According to the Stanly County deed for the Richfield Milling Company property, Mike Pence purchased the property in 1910. It was originally named Springs Mill Co. <sup>[13]</sup> or Spring Milling Company <sup>[14]</sup> due to a natural spring located behind the mill, which is still there today. It was renamed Richfield Milling Company in 1917. The mill received its own railroad track spur and line stop to handle the large amounts of fertilizer coming in to be used in the farming industry, and for product sold to be shipped out. Richfield Milling Company drew in a great deal of farm trade from upper Stanly County, as well as Rowan and Cabarrus due to its favorable location convenient to both neighboring county lines. <sup>[15]</sup>

By 1910, the mill supplied local farmers with flour, corn meal, and livestock feed. The mill depended on the railroad line to bring in the raw product the local farmers could not produce in sufficient quantities. To buy these products in bulk quantities large enough to reduce costs and to allow the mill to operate more consistently, rather than solely by the availability of local materials, the Richfield Milling Company joined in a buying cooperative with two other milling companies, one in Rockwell, Rowan County and one in Mt. Pleasant, Cabarrus County. <sup>[16]</sup>

Hundreds of tons of grain per year was delivered by farmers and processed at the mill. The grain was then sold from the mill to local communities, or shipped out via train. Later in the twentieth century the mill also had two trucks that were used for deliveries; serving twenty-five to thirty stores and area fish camps, there were four routes to be completed each week. <sup>[17]</sup>

The property was sold in 1919 to George Lefler, George Miller, W. J. Fisher, and R. L. Austin, and operated until 1934, when it was sold to W. J. Fisher. The Fisher family would own and operate the mill until it closed. In 1940 the mill was the sole remaining industry in Richfield. <sup>[18]</sup> By 1950 the flour market collapsed because the hard wheat needed to produce bleached flour came from western farms, so W. J. Fisher converted the mill exclusively to feed production. By the 1980s the mill produced feed for only the company's poultry farm, and for Ralston Purina and Central Soya. <sup>[19]</sup> The mill closed in

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1990. In 1995 Gerald and Tammy Measimer purchased the property from the Richfield Milling Company. <sup>[20]</sup> The current owner, Mr. Jimmy Faust of CULPFAUST LLC, purchased the property in October 2011. <sup>[21]</sup>

### **Architectural Context**

"Mill Construction" is a term given to that type of building construction in which the interior framing and floors are made of heavy timber and arranged in solid masses and smooth flat surfaces. This exposes the least number of corners, and avoids concealed spaces which many not be reached readily in case of fire.

Heavy timber mill construction buildings were easy to build, were comparatively economical in construction costs, were capable of carrying heavy imposed loads from machinery and goods, and were one of the best types of slow-burning construction due to the size of the large supporting timbers and flat, smooth, heavy floors used. <sup>[22]</sup>

Fires were of paramount concern in a mill due to the machinery and the fine particles of processed product in the air. Efforts to minimize the risk of fire included the use of sheet metal and solid core wood. Heavy timbers allowed for equipment vibration while still providing for building stability. Larger framing members could span longer distances and were more fire resistant than smaller dimensional sawn lumber.

Roller mills were first invented in Philadelphia in 1876 and had several advantages over the gristmill stones. Using either ceramic or steel rollers<sup>[23]</sup>, they produced a product that was more uniform, extracted more flour from the same amount of wheat as millstones, and eliminated the periodic need to sharpen the heavy gristmill stones, saving both time and money. <sup>[24]</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century most grain mills in North Carolina were water, hydroelectric and steam powered roller mills

The Richfield Milling Company was originally run by steam power<sup>[25]</sup> with a boiler, most likely using the on-site spring as its water source. It was later converted to electric motor. There was a pulley system with six-inch wide cotton belts to power the movement of grain through chutes and elevator chases in the building. The pulley system ran beneath the mill into the basement, and up to the elevator tower. <sup>[26]</sup>

To accommodate the machinery and components necessary to complete the milling process, building height became an essential extension of form-following-function, with the mill structure often multiple stories in height and further topped with a grain elevator tower to allow gravity to move grain down through the various levels of machinery. The Richfield Milling Company building is two and a half stories tall, with the elevator above the roofline.

In addition to the stability provided by the heavy timber structure, sheathing was necessary to improve resistance against racking forces caused by the wind, and which increases with building height. To counter this effect, builders began to use horizontal sheathing which improved wind

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resistance but did not provide optimal bracing. Diagonal sheathing, as seen on the Richfield Milling Company roller mill, provided the highest level of combined bracing and wind resistance. Wood weatherboard siding was then installed on top of the sheathing for additional protection against the elements.

Windows in mill buildings allowed natural light into spaces that would otherwise be too dark and where open flame from supplemental light sources would be disastrous with fine particles in the air. The openings also provided natural ventilation throughout the building. Richfield Milling Company has many window openings on all sides of the structure.

In the roller milling process, grain is first delivered to mills by wagon, truck, or railcars. The grain is unloaded directly from the delivery vehicle into pits and moved via conveyors and bucket elevators into large bins or silos. The first milling steps involve equipment that separates grain from other seeds and foreign materials such as metal, sticks, stones and straw; and scours the kernels of wheat. The wheat is now ready to be conditioned for milling, and moisture is added to make the parts of the kernel separate more easily and cleanly. The wheat kernels are now ready to be milled into flour, and are measured or fed from the bins to the "roller mills", corrugated cylinders made from ceramic or steel. The rolls are paired and rotate inward against each other, moving at different speeds. Passing through the corrugated "first break" rolls begins the separation of bran, endosperm (starch) and germ. There are [typically] five roller mills, or breaks, in the system, with each "break" roll having successively finer corrugations. After each trip through the break rolls, the grist is sent back upstairs to drop through sifters. The broken particles of wheat are elevated through tubes or on belts and then dropped into huge, vibrating, box-like sifters where they are shaken through a series of bolting cloths or screens to separate the larger from the smaller particles. The process is repeated over and over again, moving up and down and across the mill in a series until the maximum amount of flour is separated. <sup>[27]</sup>

Grain-handling equipment and machinery still left at the Richfield Milling Company roller mill include the interior one-story-tall wood-sided grain bins with bottom outflow metal pipes, some wooden chutes and elevator chases of various sizes connecting different floors, several ceiling mounted countershafts, and a floor mounted driving spindle.

Richfield Milling Company roller mill is the only surviving example of the turn-of-the-century heavy timber mill building construction in Richfield and the surrounding area. Two other mill structures, those first built by the Ritchie family in 1892, and the mill building initially used by Mike Pence before building the Springs Mill Company (later Richfield Milling Company), no longer stand. Further, the Richfield Milling Company is the only remaining structure in Richfield that recalls the farming and agricultural town at the turn of the twentieth century.

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14. Dodenhoff, op. cit.
15. "Richfield Was Settled By Ritchie Families in 1890." The Stanly News & Press, August 1940.
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18. "Richfield Was Settled By Ritichie Families In 1890.," The Stanly News & Press, August 1940
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20. North Carolina General Warranty Deed, Richfield Milling Company Grantor, Gerald and Tammy Measimer Grantee, 1995, Book 571, Page 916
21. North Carolina General Warranty Deed, Gerald and Tammy Measimer Grantor, CULPFAUST LLC Grantee, 2011, Book 1382, Page 197
22. Paul, C.E., Heavy Timber Mill Construction Buildings, National Lumber Manufacturers Association, Engineering Bulletin No. 2, May 1916
23. "Roller Mill.," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roller\\_mill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roller_mill), accessed March 2015
24. "Gristmills.," <http://ncpedia.org/gristmills>, accessed July 2015
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26. Fisher, John; Ross, Joyce; Smith, Bonnie, Interview conducted with members of the Fisher family, who owned and operated the Richfield Milling Company 1934-1990. Interview by Jon E. Palmer, April 2014
27. "Wheat Milling Process.," <http://www.namamillers.org/education/wheat-milling-process/>, accessed March 2015

Richfield Milling Company  
Name of Property

Stanly County, NC  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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"Richfield Was Settled By Ritchie Families In 1890." The Stanly News & Press, August 1940

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Name of Property

Stanly County, NC  
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**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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** ST0098

Richfield Milling Company  
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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 0.81 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 35.465850 | Longitude: -80.260790 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

**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 nominated property is identified as Stanly County PIN 662201465892. The boundary is shown on the accompanying tax map, drawn to a scale of one inch = 200 feet.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes 0.81 acres historically associated with Richfield Milling Company, and provides an appropriate setting.

Richfield Milling Company  
Name of Property

Stanly County, NC  
County and State

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jon E. Palmer, AIA, NCARB  
organization: JP+A Architect, PLLC  
street & number: 516 S Salisbury Avenue  
city or town: Spencer state: NC zip code: 28159  
e-mail: jon@jpa-arch.com  
telephone: (mobile) 704.223.1881  
date: 24 April 2016

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## 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.  
See Google Earth map, attached.  
See County GIS maps, attached.
- **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: Richfield Milling Company

City or Vicinity: Richfield

County: Stanly State: NC

Richfield Milling Company  
Name of Property

Stanly County, NC  
County and State

Photographer: Jon E. Palmer, AIA, NCARB

Date Photographed: 04 and 20 March 2014

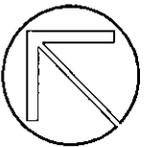
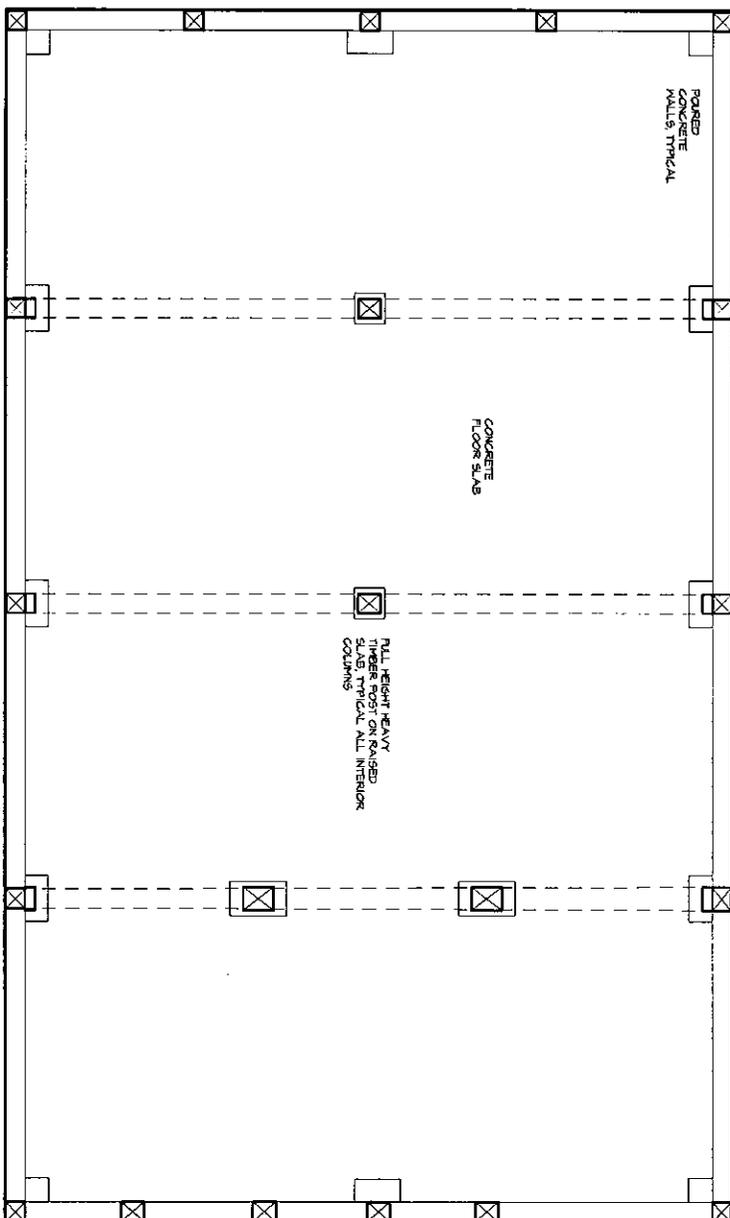
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 8. Exterior elevation looking southeast, 04MAR2014.
- 2 of 8. Exterior elevation looking southwest, 04MAR2014.
- 3 of 8. Exterior elevation, looking northwest, 04MAR2014.
- 4 of 8. Exterior elevation, looking northeast, 04MAR2014.
- 5 of 8. Interior, first floor, 1910 mill, looking south, 04MAR2014.
- 6 of 8. Interior, first floor, ca. 1960 addition, warehouse area looking east, 04MAR2014.
- 7 of 8. Interior, second floor, 1910 mill, looking north towards corner stair, 20MAR2014.
- 8 of 8. Interior, third floor, 1910 mill, looking southwest towards grain bins, 20MAR2014.

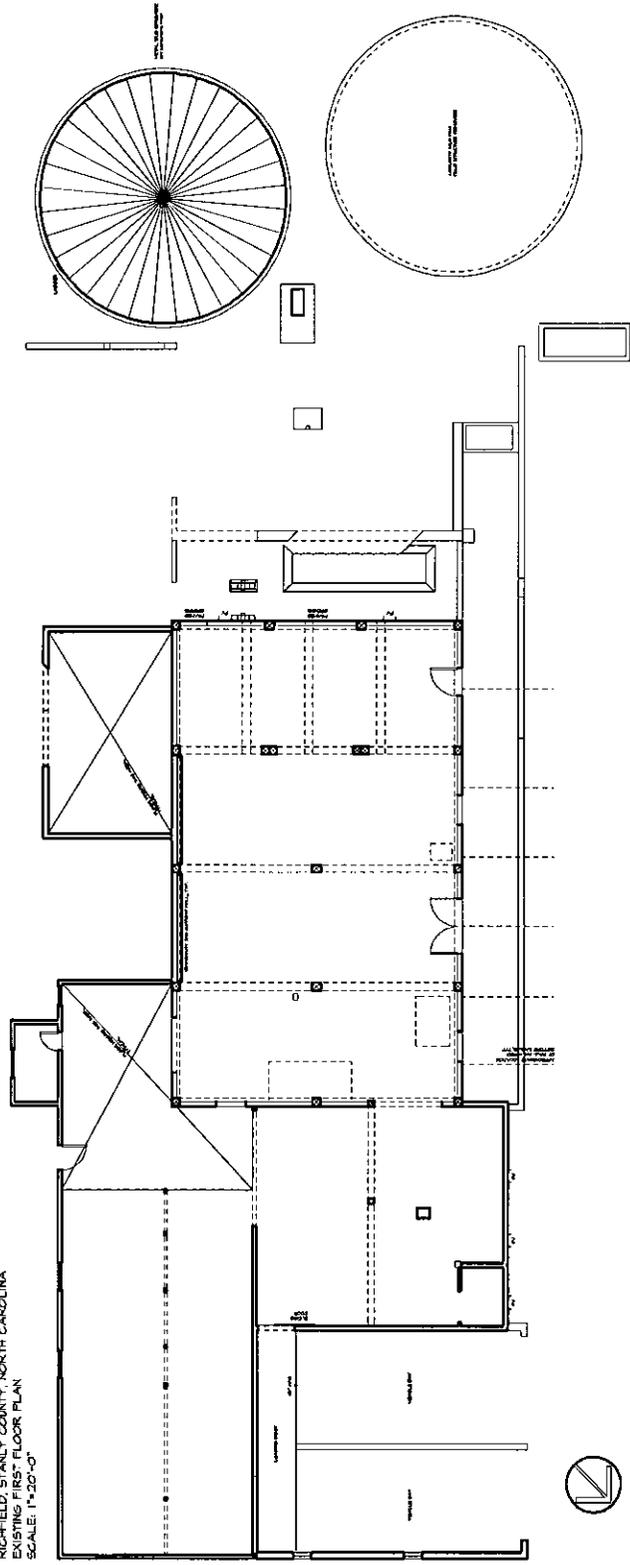
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to 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.

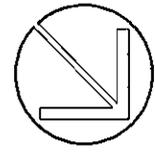
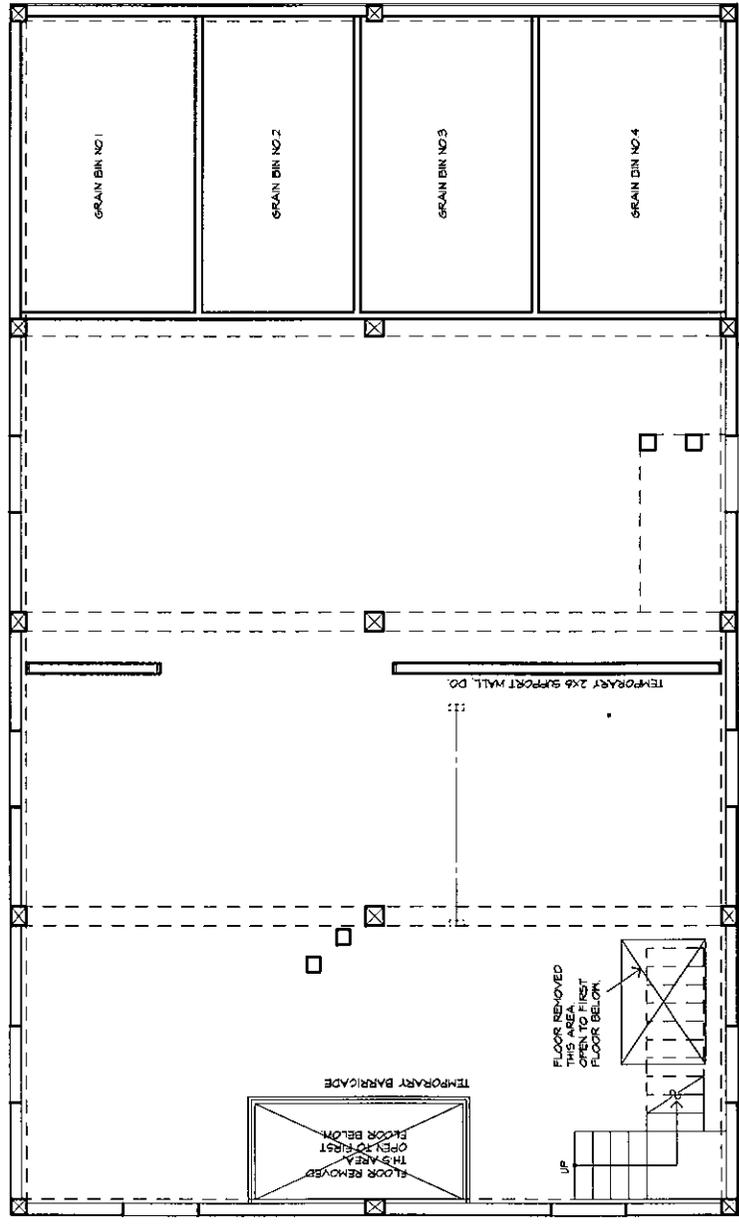
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EXISTING BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"



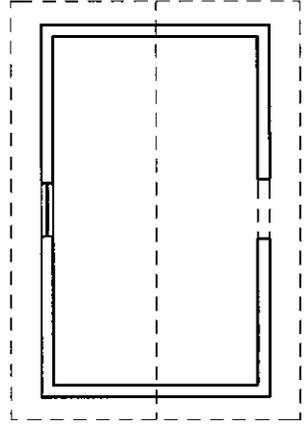
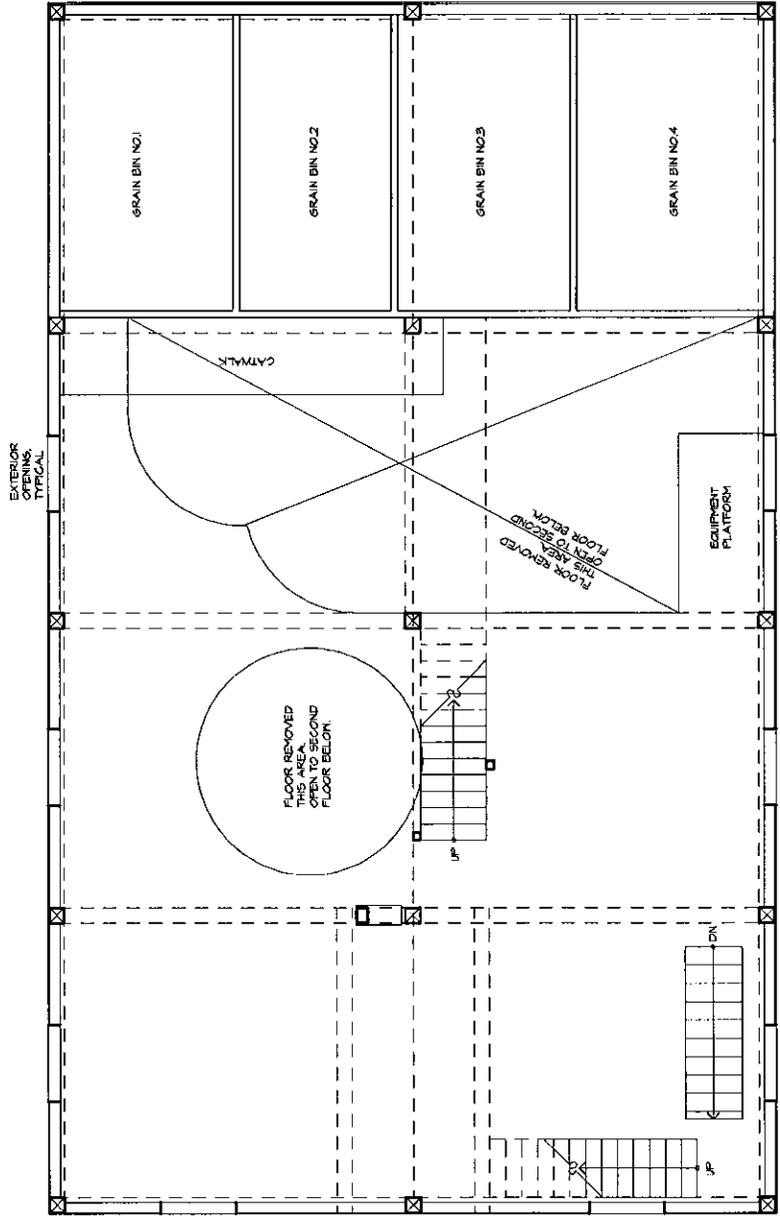
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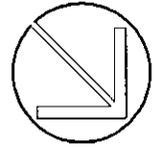
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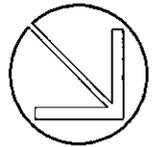
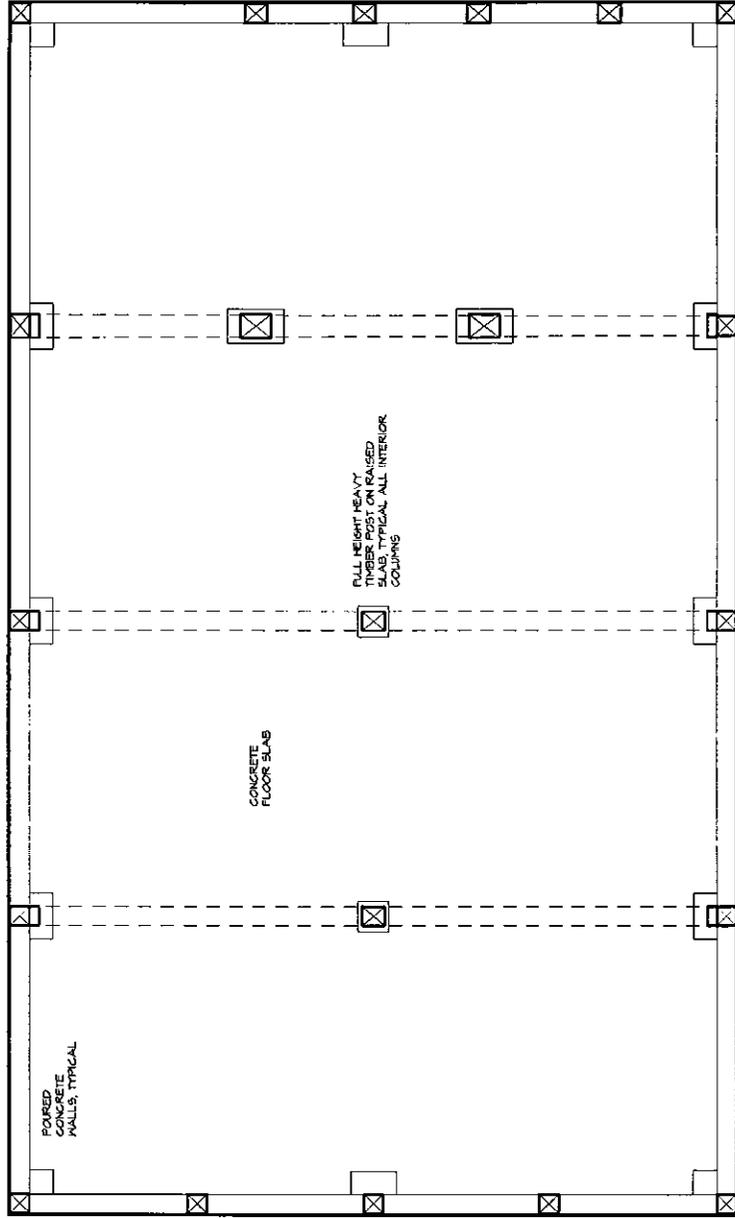
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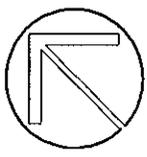
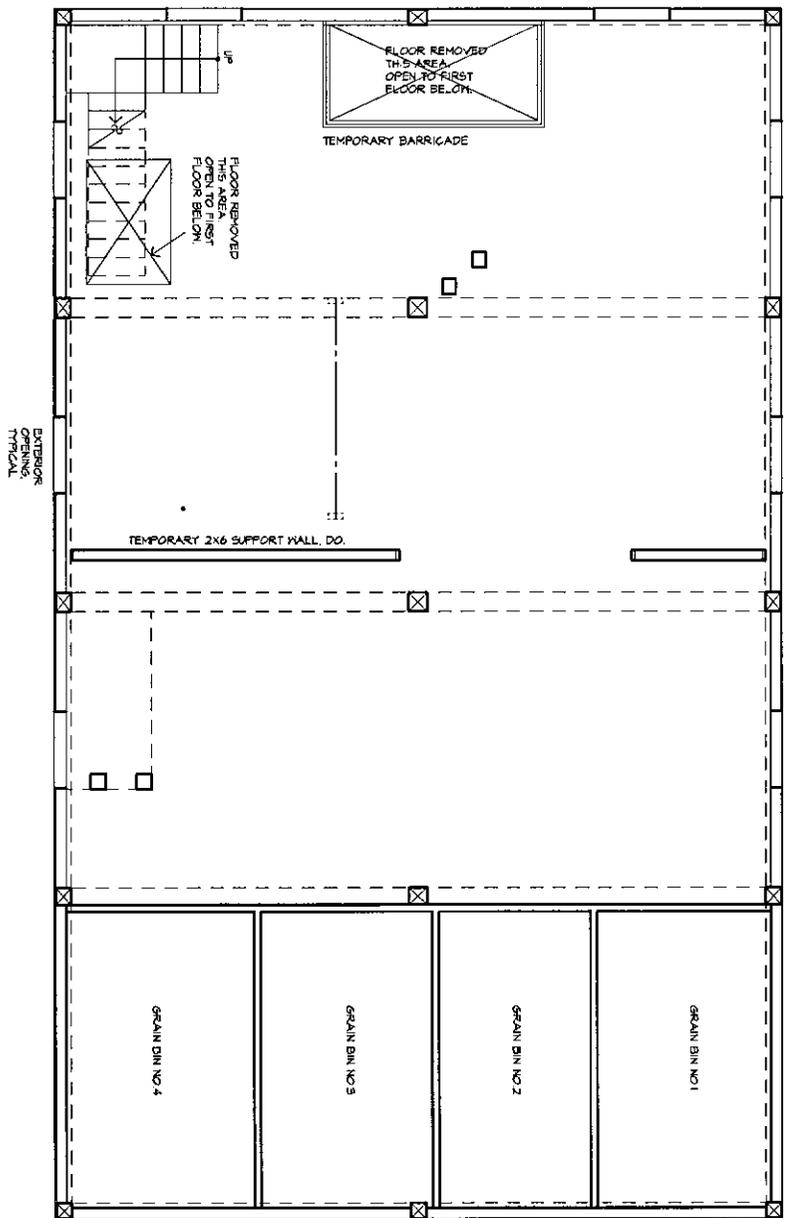
GRAIN ELEVATOR PLAN



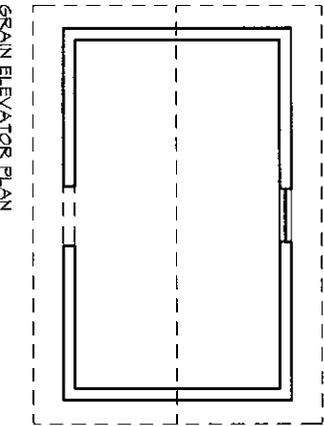
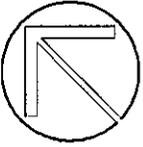
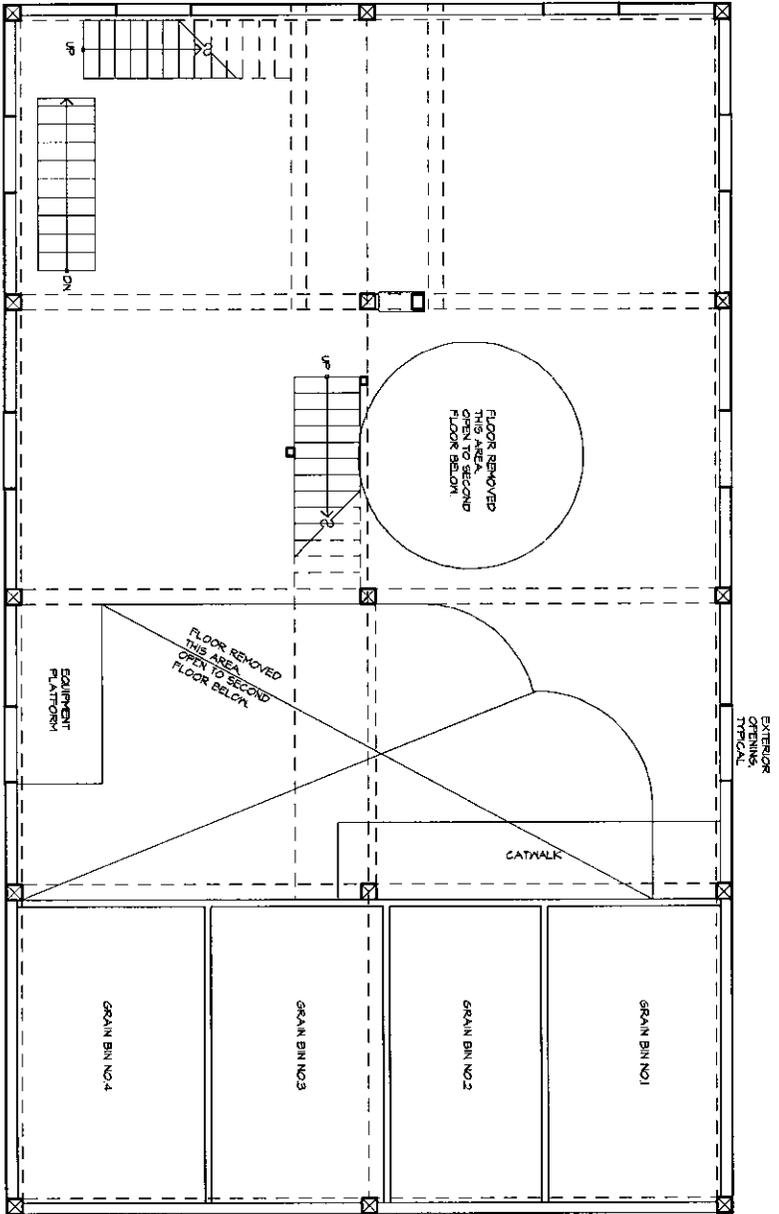
RICHFIELD MILLING COMPANY ROLLER MILL  
RICHFIELD, STANLY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
EXISTING BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"



RICHFIELD MILLING COMPANY ROLLER MILL  
RICHFIELD, STANLY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"



RICHFIELD MILLING COMPANY ROLLER MILL  
RICHFIELD, STANLY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
EXISTING THIRD FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"





Richfield Milling Company Roller Mill  
Richfield, Stanly County, NC

LAT: 35.465850 / LONG: -80.260790

© 2015 Google

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

Google

223 ft

35°27'56.98" N 80°15'38.70" W

elev 653 ft

Dec 1, 2014

Eye alt 1473 ft





**Tax Map and Site Plan  
Richfield Milling Company Roller Mill  
Richfield, Stanly County, NC**

**Key:**  
 = Nomination Boundary

**Scale: 1"=200'-0"**



(22.2A)

6146