

Brighton Dam Road

A Rustic Road (Town of Brookeville to Bordly Drive)

Nominated as a Rustic Road (Bordly Drive to New Hampshire Avenue)

Brighton Dam Road is a narrow road connecting the Town of Brookeville to Howard County at the Brighton Dam on the Patuxent River. The road has natural features and outstanding vistas. This road was designated rustic in the 2005 *Olney Master Plan* from the Town of Brookeville limits to Bordly Drive.

Recommendations

- Change designation from rustic to exceptional rustic from the Town of Brookeville to Bordly Drive.

The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee recommends reclassifying the section of Brighton Dam Road from the Town of Brookeville to Bordly Road from rustic to exceptional rustic.

To be classified as an exceptional rustic road, in addition to meeting the criteria for designation as a rustic road, it must be found that the road:

1. Contributes significantly to natural, agricultural or historic characteristics.

The road passes through forest as it travels parallel to and across the Reddy Branch.

2. Has unusual features found on few other roads in the County.

The road follows the contours of the land as it winds down and through the Reddy Branch valley.

3. Would be more negatively affected by improvements or modifications to the physical characteristics of the road than would most other roads in the rustic roads program.

The character of the road as it travels through the forest, over the stream, and past the Holland Farm would be significantly diminished if the road were to be modified or improved.

- Designate the segment of the road from Bordly Drive to New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) rustic.

Only the portion of Brighton Dam Road from Brookeville to Bordly Drive is currently classified rustic. The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee recommends a rustic designation for the section of Brighton Dam Road from Bordly Drive to New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650).

The 2005 *Olney Master Plan* rejected a rustic designation of this segment due to the non-local nature of the traffic. The other part was designated rustic, in part, because Bordly Drive had been completed and was siphoning off the non-local traffic from that segment.

- Approve the road's significant features.

When the road was designated rustic in the master plan, the significant features were not specified. A table in the Master Plan indicates that Brighton Dam Road—between the Town of Brookeville and Bordly Drive—has outstanding natural features, outstanding vistas of rural landscape, and follows an historic alignment. Staff recommends designating the significant features listed below, which includes items from both segments of the road.

Significant Features

- Narrow pavement
- Alignment through Reddy Branch
- Steep embankments, especially near Brookeville
- Views across fields of historic Holland farmstead
- Two older houses very close to road
- Historic alignment
- Views of streams and forest

History

Brighton Dam Road, west of New Hampshire Avenue, was platted in 1857 and established by 1865. It stretched from the turnpike in Brookeville to the cattle scales in the agricultural community of Brighton, home to European colonists by 1761.

Revolutionary War patriot James Holland built a home at Prospect Hill (Master Plan Historic Site #23/72) by 1783. The property included a woolen mill, stone quarry, and housing for people enslaved by the Holland family. Holland's descendants settled at the c. 1800 Grafton Holland Farm (Master Plan Historic Site #23/82) and Holland Farm (Master Plan Historic Site #23/81), built by 1865. Nearby, the Brookeville Woolen Mill (Master Plan Historic Site # 23/69) and Mill Worker's House (Master Plan Historic Site #23/148) are rare surviving structures from an early 19th-century mill complex.

By the mid-19th century Brighton was an established agricultural village along the Unity-Colesville Road (today MD 650). Noted horticulturist Henry Stabler established the Roslyn estate c. 1844 and built a surviving bank barn (Master Plan Historic Site #23/79). Nearby Fairfield (Master Plan Historic Site #23/85) was built c. 1856. By the 1860s, Brighton was also home to a growing free African American community, who over time established a benevolent society, school, and the now-demolished Centennial Methodist Episcopal Church.

At the intersection with New Hampshire Avenue, the site of a former 19th-century grange hall is adjacent to the c. 1870 St. Luke's Episcopal Church and associated burial ground and memorial garden (Burial Sites Inventory Sites #133 & #229). The Brighton Grange met in the hall by 1891 and was associated with the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, a social and educational organization for farmers.

East of New Hampshire Avenue, Brighton Dam Road was not established until the 1940s, when the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission constructed the Brighton Dam to create a reservoir for drinking water. The newly built dam and road replaced the Green's Bridge crossing of the Patuxent River, which dated to the 18th century, to the north. The section of Brighton Dam Road east of New Hampshire Avenue is not included in the rustic designation.

Traveling Experience

Exceptional Rustic Section

Leaving the town of Brookeville heading east on Brighton Dam Road, low lying areas and Reddy Branch are seen to the left. Then open fields and farmland predominate along this narrow road, with attractive red barns and outbuildings to the north. The road narrows even further after crossing Reddy Branch. Nearing the end of this section of road, a fantastic large white farmhouse, the Holland Farm, is on the right, with multiple outbuildings, a spring house, and a large red gambrel-roofed bank barn.

Rustic Section

From the stop sign at Bordly Drive, turn east to continue on the rustic section of Brighton Dam Road. There is a flood zone where the road crosses over the Hawlings River and the road becomes winding and narrow. Power lines cross the road affording some long views. Homes are built along the road in the next section, but in a very short distance there are old gate posts to driveways on the left side of the road. The last of these is Prospect Hill, which is now host to a farm stand that is periodically open on weekends. Mature trees line the road as it approaches New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) where St. Luke's Episcopal Church and cemetery are on the left. This is the old town of Brighton and the end of the rustic portion of the road.

Environment

Brighton Dam Road is within the Reddy Branch and Hawlings River watersheds. The road crosses both bodies of water, as well as several other smaller streams. Reddy Branch is a major tributary to the Hawlings River, the largest tributary to the Patuxent River in Montgomery County. The Hawlings River confluence with the Patuxent River is located just downstream from the Brighton Dam, which controls the upstream Triadelphia Reservoir.

The road parallels Reddy Branch and the Reddy Branch Stream Valley Park to the north with mixed forest and canopy cover. As the road curves north, it crosses Reddy Branch and the associated floodplain just upstream from its confluence with the Hawlings River. The road crosses over the Hawlings River and through the Hawlings River Stream Valley Park. There is no public access to the stream valley park from the road due to the lack of pullovers and the wide floodplain. A trail is planned for this reach, but the alignment has not been determined. Between the two power line rights-of-way, the road crosses the Hawlings River and associated stream valley park through the river's floodplain. There is no public park access in this location either.

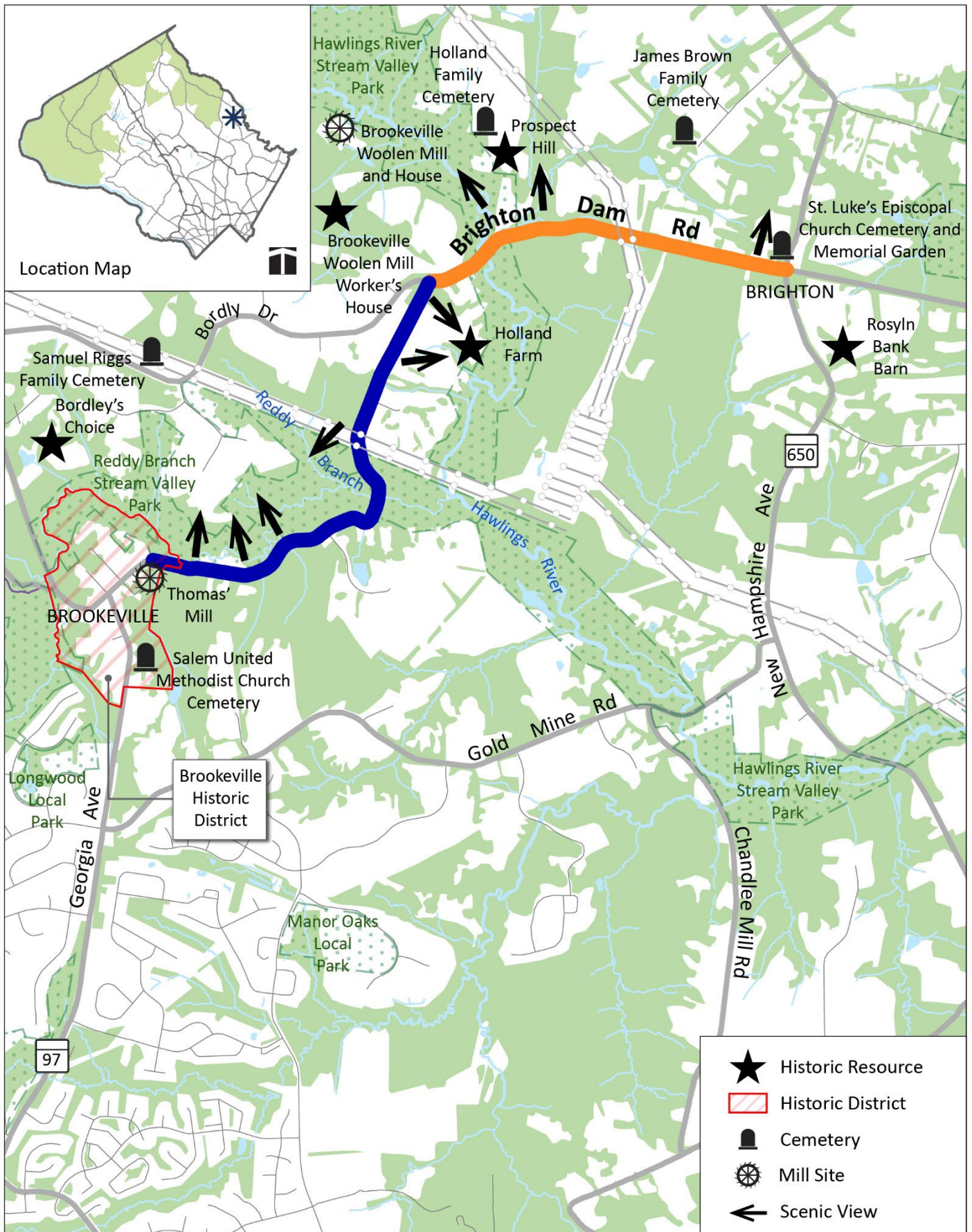
Much of the forest along Brighton Dam Road is in public or semi-public ownership or is protected on private land. It appears that hedgerow canopy cover has suffered from utility line clearing over time.

Road Characteristics: Exceptional Rustic Section

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| Extents | Town of Brookeville to Bordly Drive |
| Length | 1.28 miles |
| Width | 17-19 feet |
| Surface | Paved |
| Lanes | No center line or edge markings |
| Shoulders | None |

Road Characteristics: Rustic Section

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| Extents | Bordly Drive to New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) |
| Length | 0.97 miles |
| Width | 19-20 feet |
| Surface | Paved |
| Lanes | Centerline and edge markings for easternmost 500 feet of road; otherwise no center line or edge markings |
| Shoulders | None other than a few very short sections of curbing |





View of Brighton Dam Road looking west toward the Town of Brookeville



Exceptional rustic portion of Brighton Dam Road heading east



View across field to historic Holland Farm



View looking east of house close to the road