

## **Waterford Citizens' Association Statement to the Historic District Review Committee, August 1, 2005**

I am speaking today as the President of the Waterford Citizens' Association. The Citizens' Association represents 175 families in the village and its surrounding area and was established in 1947 to further the common good and general welfare of the community.

The Association strongly urges the Historic District Review Committee to uphold Loudoun County's Historic Guidelines for construction in Waterford. The current application to modify the Simms House is only one of the many examples of inappropriate change that has and will affect Waterford's historic homes.

During the Waterford Fair, I am able to tell the 900 visitors that tour my historic house that the view from my porch hasn't changed in a hundred years. I hope someone can say the same in 100 years. I know that the residents of Waterford that respect its history always hope that all of its residents will feel that they are only caretakers of the houses they live in.

In the America of the early 21st century, Waterford's significance is evident. Established in the 18th century, the village grew to pre-Civil War prominence. Today, **three quarters** of the buildings erected before 1834 are still standing. The visual demarcation is evident between 19th-century rural village and the surrounding countryside of fields and farmsteads.

In the past, the lack of vigilance with the historic guidelines have allowed inappropriate building additions and new homes that don't reflect Waterford's history. It is our contention that the HDRC now needs to assert an even stronger presence to protect Waterford's buildings and viewscape. Will Waterford be able to look the same in 100 years as it does now?

We often hear that Waterford is a living village and needs to keep up with the needs of its residents. I disagree with this concept. Everyone involved in Waterford's future needs to fight to maintain its current look and feel. I foresee that there will be more and more pressure to change the look to Waterford's architecture as new owners arrive with the financial ability and desire to increase the size of the houses they purchase, and who simply view Waterford as a quaint, picturesque village in which to live. Waterford's history and unique setting deserve protection which, of course, is why it was designated a National Historic Landmark.

The rejection of the demolition of the Simms house should only be the first of an ongoing effort to preserve Waterford's architecture. Looking back it is easy to see that some of the changes that were authorized in the past shouldn't have been allowed.

There is now a large number of citizens that will be taking a more active role in protecting Waterford's buildings and viewscape. Not just because we live here, but because we desire to preserve a little of yesterday for tomorrow.

Try to imagine Loudoun County in 100 years. There will be more than one million residents and subdivisions equal to Fairfax County. But in all of this change, hopefully visitors still will be able to walk through Waterford and imagine life before the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The actions we take today will either help America's children and grandchildren to do just that – or relegate Waterford to a museum of artifacts, maps, and explanatory notes. The choice is ours – today.

Thank you

Edward Lehmann

President, Waterford Citizens' Association