



NHL Executive Summary



Name of Property:	Waterford Historic District NHL (update)
City, State:	Waterford, Virginia
Period of Significance:	1733-1936 (Criteria 4 and 5); 1931-1992 (Criteria 1)
NHL Criteria:	1, 4, and 5
Criteria Exceptions:	8
NHL Theme:	III. Expressing Cultural Values 5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design V. Developing the American Economy VII. Transforming the Environment (conservation/historic preservation)
Previous Recognition:	1970 Designated a National Historic Landmark
National Historic Context:	XVI. Architecture V. Historic District XXXIII. Historic Preservation B. Regional Efforts: The South

NHL Significance:

- Originally designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970, the 1,420-acre Waterford district survives as an intact eighteenth- and nineteenth-century agricultural service village landscape that evokes the



economic, architectural, aesthetic, and cultural patterns characteristic of America's pre-urbanized history. Waterford is an exceptionally well-preserved agricultural service village possessing intact architecture and layout in the village core with surrounding open space and agricultural areas that are integral to understanding its history and evolution. (Criteria 4 and 5)

- The Waterford Historic District is also nationally significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 1, for the sustained and creative twentieth-century historic preservation campaign that ensured its present high degree of integrity. Waterford's remarkably intact village architecture and expansive agricultural setting survives with such high integrity because of a multipronged and intensive campaign that employed several emerging preservation approaches and a diverse set of preservation tools. Spearheaded by private citizens, this decades-long collaborative effort represents a laboratory for experimental private preservation strategies that resulted in the conservation of a living landscape where most properties, unlike in a museum restoration, have remained in private ownership.

Integrity:

- Waterford's natural features—including hedgerows, tree lines, waterways, and viewsheds—have been sensitively conserved and continue to represent an authentic rural agricultural service village set within farmlands. The intact views and vistas add greatly to the authentic feel of a rural village as it might have appeared during the nineteenth century, featuring only houses, a few small businesses in the village core, and historic farms and meadows enveloping the village core.
- The architecture and layout in the village core is remarkably well-preserved. There are 245 contributing resources in the Waterford Historic District, including the 1818 Waterford Mill, 1761 Quaker meetinghouse, multiple nineteenth-century school buildings, and a largely intact village and rural road system.
- Waterford has very limited modern infill, especially within the historic core.
- The most significant change that has occurred within the Waterford Historic District is the large number of homes that have been constructed in newer subdivisions at the periphery of the village, inside and just outside the district boundary. However, most have been sensitively sited to preserve the historic viewsheds from the center of the village.

Owner of Property: Multiple (private, public-local)

Acreage of Property: 1,420 acres

Origins of Nomination: The local Waterford Foundation and the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office approached NPS regarding updating the documentation. NPS funded the nomination, partnering with the University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Design to complete the research and preparation of the updated NHL documentation.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: The Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, Loudoun County government, and the local Waterford Foundation have indicated that the updated documentation will assist them in ongoing preservation and management of the district and easement programs. In addition, the documentation will assist a citizen-led planning initiative begun by the Waterford Citizens' Association, known as Waterford 2033.



Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of August 21, 2023):

- Margaret K. Good, Past President and Past Executive Director, Waterford Foundation
- Christy Hertel, President; Mike Stup, Vice President; Nancy Doane, Secretary; Whitney Chamberlin, Treasurer; Waterford Citizens Association
- Julie V. Langan, Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources (SHPO)
- Susan Manch, President, Waterford Foundation Board of Directors
- W. Brown Morton, Department of Historic Preservation, University of Mary Washington (retired) and Margaret T. Morton, Journalist (retired)
- Robert A. Pollard, Chairman, Loudoun County Heritage Commission
- Madeline Skinner, President, Loudoun Historic Village Alliance
- Cate Magennis Wyatt, Waterford 2033

Landmarks Committee Comments:

- District's racialized landscape is not clear in the nomination. Move away from a White-centered narrative and add information about free Black population in the community.
- Mention that closing of the former Freedman's Bureau School was a not a conscious decision but a result of Virginia's Massive Resistance to desegregation of schools at that time.
- Add a photo of the cemetery as the documentation makes clear that it was racially divided.
- More discussion of how a local community's historic preservation often displaces African American residents and communities.
- Add information about whether or not the Black and White communities intermixed from the beginning, at some point, or not at all.

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the acceptance of the updated documentation for the Waterford Historic District NHL in Loudoun County, Virginia, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: The National Park System Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior the acceptance of the updated documentation for the Waterford Historic District NHL in Loudoun County, Virginia.