Hello,

My name is Tom Dickinson. My wife Ann and I recently moved to Warrenton from Arlington, where we lived for 42 years…a big and trying transition, needless to say!

Although I worked at the Pentagon for 33 years, my passion has always been History and Historic Preservation. I have a B.A. in U.S. History from Beloit College. When we moved to Arlington in 1978, one of the first things I noticed was what seemed an unusually high and continuous level of demolition of commercial and especially residential properties all over Arlington County. So I started photo documenting these many vanishing properties, especially those with some particular historic or architectural significance.

I’ve been a member of the Arlington Historical Society since 1981, and I served for 4 years as Vice-President, and 3 years as President of the AHS. I’ve been on the Board of Directors since 2006. I also served on the Board of the Arlington Heritage Alliance, the only local non-government historic preservation advocacy and education organization. When that organization disbanded, I formed a follow-up group, Preservation Arlington.

I was an appointed member to and served on: the Arlington-Jamestown 400th Anniversary Committee; the Centennial of Military Aviation Committee; the Arlington Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemoration Committee; and the Arlington World War I Commemoration Task Force.

In 2018, I was awarded a grant from the Arlington Arts Alliance to produce a photo exhibit which I called “Windows to the Past – Arlington, Then and Now.” This was a collection of old salvaged window frames, in which I placed photographs of buildings and structures in Arlington prior to demolition, and next to it, a photo of the building that replaced it on the same site. This collection of 72 photos was on display in several Arlington branch libraries for 2 years, until the pandemic.

In 2020-21, I led and sustained the local effort to preserve the historic, pre-Civil War, 9.5 acre Febrey-Lothrop-Rouse estate, the largest privately owned residential parcel of land in the County. I was able to obtain over 1,500 signatures on a petition which I presented to the County Board to urge preservation of the main 1855 mansion house, the 2nd and 3rd guest homes, and numerous outbuildings, tennis court, in-ground pool, etc. etc. Unfortunately, the owner/trustees were able to get a demolition permit approved prior to completion and final approval of the Local Historic District designation which I had applied for months before. The entire estate was demolished earlier this year.

Now that I am a resident of Warrenton, I would like to continue to do this kind of photo documentation of threatened and/or abandoned city and rural structures, homes, barns, buildings, etc. to include researching the history of each structure. The ultimate goal would be to produce an historic resources inventory for all of Fauquier County.

I recently met with Mr. Sean Redmiles to discuss this proposal with him, and he fully supports and endorses this idea for Warrenton and Fauquier County.

**I would like to ask for your help** in identifying any such threatened or abandoned or unusual historic structures in and around Warrenton and Fauquier County – historic homes, commercial buildings, farms, barns, sheds, stone walls, mechanical structures, etc. etc. If you are aware of or have noticed such properties or sites, please contact me with the address/location, or with any ideas or suggestions. I will then track down the owner and seek permission to photograph the property, under the auspices of the Fauquier Historical Society.

I look forward to contributing to the mission of your Fauquier Historical Society, and preserving it’s unique and important history for present and future generations!

Thank you very much.

Tom Dickinson

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