



TESTIMONIALS



The Woolen Mills, Virginia

What are you doing to create great streets and neighborhoods in your community?



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I am working on a handful of great streets in one great Virginia neighborhood: The Woolen Mills. This historic mill village is beautiful. It features a mixture of uses, benefits from an active neighborhood association, and inspires civic pride.

The mills began as a river port and merchant mill in 1790, serving the surrounding farms (including Thomas Jefferson's Monticello), the young city of Charlottesville, and soon the new University of Virginia. The mills became a center for textiles, supplying uniforms to Confederate troops during the Civil War. Towards the end of the war, the mills were burned by Union troops, possibly by accident.

The mill village was rebuilt and thrived, barely touched by the Great Depression. During this period, most of the extant mill buildings were put in place. Sadly, the mill was shut down in the 1970s and the community became a suburb of Charlottesville, split in half by annexation. Heavy industrial development has threatened the rural character of the community, adding storage sheds, junk yards, and trucking facilities where there were once farms and a country club.



My neighbors and I have been working to nominate this neighborhood to the National Register of Historic Places so that it might be better preserved and recognized as the priceless asset that it is, a lesson not just in history but in human scale,



sustainable, mixed use development based on local needs and resources. I have been working with Alison Snow from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, along with more people than I could probably name who have helped in some way, most especially photographer and neighbor Bill Emory, neighborhood president Victoria Dunham, Susan Smead from VDHR, and Douglas Day from the Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society.

We completed the architectural survey of the neighborhood in January and are working on the full submission, which will be prepared in August. With luck, it will be accepted by the end of the year.

Click here for local news coverage of our work: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyUwD2OtAR0.