



April 10, 1986

Edwin C. King, Chairman
Board of County Supervisors
Prince William County
1 County Complex Court
Prince William, Virginia 22192

Dear Mr. King:

It has been brought to the attention of the Prince William County Historical Commission that a number of buildings are slated for demolition on the grounds of the old County Courthouse in Manassas. In addition to the Courthouse itself, the Commission recommends that at least two other buildings in that complex be preserved.

The old Jail building was built during 1892-93, along with the Courthouse. We have a photograph of it taken in 1894 which shows that, underneath its stucco exterior, it is constructed of red brick and sandstone, making it stylistically similar and complementary to the Courthouse itself. Frances Jones, the architectural historian who surveyed the property for the Historical Commission a few years ago had this to say: "This building, though it could use some restoration, is an important element in the Prince William Courthouse complex. Since this building and the Courthouse were built at the same time, and are both historically and architecturally linked, efforts to preserve its original appearance should commence immediately. The Courthouse is already a locally-recognized landmark, and is in good condition. If a decision is made to list the courthouse on the National and State registers, then it would be natural to include the old Jail, despite its present appearance, in the nomination."

The old Bennett School Building (at 9300 Lee Avenue) was constructed in 1908-09. It was designed by architect Charles M. Robinson to hold the first agricultural high school for Virginia's eighth congressional district. Almost immediately, however, it was also needed for primary instruction and teacher training. Aside from its many years of service to the community and the memories associated with it, the building has architectural features that make it worth adapting to other uses. The main entrance is flanked by corinthian columns which are surmounted by a pediment in the Greek style. The