SAMPLE LETTER:

Tom Kelly, Dir. Public Works Office, Carlisle – IMNE-CLB-PW@conus.army.mil

Ty McPhillips, Dir. Carlisle Barracks Housing – IMNE-CLB-PWH@conus.army.mil

Carol Lee, National Register and Survey Coordinator, PA Historical and Museum Commission – calee@pa.gov

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Dear

I am writing to you regarding the demolition of a farmhouse on the grounds of the Carlisle Barracks.  I wish to express my disappointment in your decision to do so, and I hope you will reconsider destroying this site after hearing my views regarding the farmhouse and its connection to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School and other events that have been extremely significant to US history and our American heritage.

I became aware of the farmhouse demolition project through word of mouth from others who, like me, have no membership in or direct association with Native American tribes. Our awareness of the troubling history associated with American westward expansion and its impact on indigenous peoples compels us, however, to communicate our concern to you.

In order to fully embrace our national heritage as a country of diverse peoples and experiences, we must come to terms with some of its more troubling legacies as well as its triumphs and successes. In particular, as my own understanding increases about the indigenous cultures residing in North America before Europeans arrived, I deeply regret the devastation and trauma subsequently wreaked upon them. I strongly feel that we European-Americans badly need tangible, material reminders of that legacy to sustain our awareness of it, counter unhealthy romanticizing of Native American cultures, and temper our inclination to repeat similar errors in relating to others we encounter.

Beyond that, I strongly advocate for recognition and respect of the significance this facility holds for modern Native Americans themselves. As one of the last physical reminders of a policy that traumatized untold numbers of indigenous children and their descendants, it plays a key role in healing their memories, strengthening their identity, and restoring their self-respect and wholeness as human beings. So on their behalf also, I implore that you reverse your decision to demolish the facility and instead collaborate with descendents of Carlisle residents and others to restore, preserve, and deploy this significant artifact in service toward healing those historical wounds.

I also understand that this facility carries additional associations with the Gettysburg campaign and the story of African-American military experience, and that it possesses unique historical features, as well. When considering these added facets of its notable history, the determination that the structure has no historical significance and decision to demolish it becomes even more unconscionable.

While military housing is certainly a noteworthy objective, there are countless alternatives to providing it that exclude demolition of this iconic structure. I urgently request that you reverse your decision and pursue those alternatives.

Sincerely,