

NAACP New Jersey State Conference

4326 Harbor Beach Boulevard # 775
Brigantine, New Jersey 08203
www.NJSCNAACP.org (609) 310-0211

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April 11, 2018

State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
Historic Preservation Office
PO Box 420
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420

Attn: Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe

Re: 753 Walnut Street, Camden, NJ

Dear Commissioner McCabe:

I bring you greetings on behalf of the NAACP New Jersey State Conference, our Officers, Executive Committee and members of our 41 Branches throughout the 21 counties in the State of New Jersey.

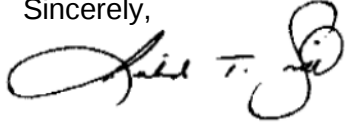
We have been made aware of the study commissioned by your office into the historical significance of 753 Walnut Street, Camden, New Jersey and its conclusions or recommendations. We reject the very formation of such study and their finding. There was no rational reason why this property was subjected to such scrutiny. There have been more than 51,000 properties and sites placed on New Jersey Historic Register without ever having been subjected to any "study" to determine their historical significance. This reason alone causes us serious concern.

There exists hard evidence that Martin Luther King, Jr. lived at 753 Walnut Street, Camden. There exists hard evidence that while living in Camden he was subjected to racism in Maple Shade. There exists hard evidence that this racism caused him to move to action. There exists hard evidence that he along with notable local civil rights leaders such as Dr. Ulysses S. Wiggins and Attorney Robert Burke Johnson worked together to fight this injustice. All of this occurred before Dr. King became a national figure in the civil rights movement. Thus, it can be reasonably concluded that his stay in New Jersey became the birthplace of his civil rights activism. Such documented events are very significant to American and New Jersey history and thereby must be noted by such official designation.

Therefore, we strongly urge your body to reject the study and designate 753 Walnut Street, Camden, New Jersey for listing in the New Jersey Historic Registry.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard T. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "S".

Richard T. Smith
Member – National Board of Directors – NAACP National Office
President, NAACP New Jersey State Conference
president@njnaacp.org
(609) 310-0211

cc: Governor Phil Murphy
Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver
Camden County NAACP
Patrick Duff

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