Dr Sophie H Jones, Department: History (School of Histories, Languages and Cultures)

**Abstract**

In Philadelphia’s ‘Old City’, west of the Delaware River, you’ll find Elfreth’s Alley: nestled between Front Street and Second Street, thirty-two houses which line a narrow cobbled street. Constructed between 1703 and 1836, Elfreth’s Alley is believed to be the oldest continually inhabited road in America.

Although the houses are not quite identical, they are largely uniform, reflecting Enlightenment ideas of symmetry in design. Each house is constructed of brick, they have three storeys plus basements, and large sash windows. Some (not pictured) have Doric pilasters – a fashionable neo-classical decorative feature, designed to resemble a column or pillar. These houses, constructed in the Georgian (c.1714-1830) architectural style, are reminiscent of the surviving eighteenth-century buildings that we see in Liverpool’s Georgian Quarter, including on Campus. As a historian of the eighteenth-century Atlantic, Elfreth’s Alley is a fascinating fragment of an earlier time, and give an insight into life in colonial Philadelphia.