

Public comment received  
for 242 Christian Street

## 242 Christian Street

rabanth@aol.com <rabanth@aol.com>

Wed 5/22/2024 7:53 AM

To: preservation <preservation@Phila.gov>; Paul Steinke <psteinke@preservationalliance.com>

**External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.**

---

Greetings to staff, Committee and Commission,

I am writing to oppose the legalization of the illegal cellar stair at 242 Christian Street. The Committee and Commission have in the past often denied such cellar entries as not meeting the Secretary of the Interior Standards. Although modifying the basement door to appear more like the basement window would help on an elevation drawing, it does not hide the fact that there is still a major non-historic change to the front facade. This change is very visible to the public walking on the sidewalk because it is so close to eye level. Approval of one of these on a block tends to encourage others on a block to do the same thing. It should be remembered that these 1820 houses typically had wood cellar bulkheads. This one was removed when the c 1860 marble watertable was added to the building.

The request for these cellar doors often comes with the excavation of the basement. Although the excavation itself is not an exterior alteration, there is an alarming history in Philadelphia of DIY excavations resulting in building collapses because the sidewalls and chimney are often left without support foundations. The foundations of these 1820 houses are often only loose stone set with clay in any case. The Committee members and the representative from L&I should be alert to the measures that have been taken to deal with this in order to avoid issues that could affect the exterior, particularly if an architect or engineer has not been involved in the design.

When the front door is restored, the existing original door surround should be preserved. The door would have had the typical Greek Revival horizontal wood panels, not a Colonial 6 panel.

Thank you

Randal Baron