



303 Lincoln Avenue - Buttercup Cottage - Kathleen Donnell

Years Built - 1873-1877

Buttercup, as the yellow two-story was renamed by Kathleen and Brad Donnell when they bought it in 2002, is the Rev. Charles F. McCauley Cottage built circa 1877. First renovations were made in 1910, according to Cape May Point Borough Hall Records. Kathleen has a black and white picture of the South Cape May trolley track running in front of the cottage with ladies in full Victorian attire waiting nearby. The home was featured in the book *Three Walking Tours of Historic Cape May Point Cottages* by Joe J. Jordan for some of its architectural features, such as the barge board along the roof. Part of the original brick foundation is evident, and the one narrow interior stairway from the first to second floor is authentic. Kathleen and her husband, Brad, decided to maintain the exterior of the home in vivid colors, as well as decorate living areas with lace curtains, wallpaper, floral arrangements, watercolor pictures of historic Cape May landmarks, wooden rockers, and wicker furniture in keeping with the spirit and style of the Victorian Period. Porch rail spindles are crafted in Victorian style and the newer purple vinyl hurricane shutters imitate the original wood ones. The lamppost at the entrance to the property has been fitted with flickering flame bulbs to warmly welcome visitors and hearken to the gaslights of Cape May Point's past.

Challenges Faced:

- The dual upper and lower verandas needed replacing.
- Original structural features such as the front porch floor to ceiling windows, second floor double porch doors, ornate wood molding, staircase, pantry closet, interior Victorian door locks, and back bedroom original slat wooden floor, the red tin roof, and the wooden spire at the top of the home have all required repairs and maintenance.
- A new water spigot to the front garden and a main turn off for the house were needed as the original ones were too corroded and old to attempt to repair - as well as being very difficult to access. (The original outdoor water valve was buried a foot down in a pipe in the center of the garden bed, and the original house turn off valve required a sandy belly crawl under the back of the house.)
- Cracks in interior room walls formed from the house settling over the years.
- Rotting porch spindles were knocked right out by sliding furniture which blew across the upper porch in a recent windstorm.
- Areas of the Back Step and Foundation were crumbling.
- Faded and Cracked Outside Lamp Post.
- Rotting entranceway trellis.





303 Lincoln Avenue - Buttercup Cottage - Kathleen Donnell

Years Built - 1873-1877

Actions Taken:

- Brad oversaw both porches being replaced with new wood floors including reinforcement of the footings and support of the front wall of the cottage.
- Kathleen's son Kevin has fixed the antique doorknobs and door locks, painted outside doors, fixed old molding using wood dough, paint and new pieces of wood (all from Swains). The family has repainted the wooden bedroom floor, and front and back steps with interior/exterior paint. The wooden spire was re-sculpted where it was starting to rot and repainted; the red tin roof was sanded and repainted (both by a local handyman).
- This summer, as part of digging up and replanting the front flowerbed, a new spigot was added to the side of the house so that we could run a water-conserving drip hose to the garden. A new turn-off valve was installed at the base of the cellar stairs.
- Cracks in several spots have been repaired using wood dough, hand sanding, and targeted paint application.
- New wood spindles were purchased, installed, and painted and the plan is to repaint all of the porch railing in the near future.
- The back step and foundation were fixed using concrete patching and then matching exterior gray paint.
- The lamppost itself was cleaned, painted with black Rust-Oleum and the upper glass portion was polished (elbow grease and Windex) and the crack repaired using a silicon adhesive. (Yes - Swains Loves Us!)

There is always more to do but maintaining this historic home and its gardens are a labor of love and pride for the owner and her family.

