



411 Cambridge Avenue - Steven and Lori Saulino Year Built - 1881

Originally built as **The Schoolhouse** for Cape May Point, the building featured a front entry stair hall serving a single large classroom on each of its two stories. After Lower Township consolidated school districts in 1931 the building was converted to residential use. Steven Saulino indicated that when they acquired the property in August 2018 it was serving as a single-family home, but there was evidence of it having been partitioned into as many as three dwelling units earlier. The Saulinos have essentially retained the interior layout as when purchased – an “upside down house” with the upper floor as a Great Room, maintaining the sense of the original classroom for grades 5-8, and the lower one having been partitioned for sleeping, bathing and other amenities. The Saulinos retained an architect and experienced local contractor to assist them in their remediation of deferred maintenance, bringing the building into better Code compliance, and adapting finishes and systems for greater long-term durability. When Steve Saulino speculated after buying the property that the condition of the building was about five-years away from becoming a teardown owing to deferred maintenance, the contractor didn’t disagree! The overall duration of the restoration/renovation project encompassed a year.

Challenges Faced:

- The mortar used in the original red brick foundation had “turned to powder”
- Building’s exterior walls were built without structural sheathing or thermal insulation, thus incurring high heating/cooling energy costs.
- Existing front and side exterior stairs and decks were severely rotted and without building code compliant structural anchorage, railings or balustrades.
- Exterior wooden clapboard siding was deteriorated and requiring annual maintenance to resist rotting and failing paint.
- Exterior wood windows were deteriorated and energy-inefficient single-glazed.
- Exterior front doors were deteriorated.
- Wooden flooring in the entrance vestibule was severely worn.
- Fireplace elements not functional.
- Interior plaster was cracked with portions broken loose from supporting lath.
- Utilities, HVAC, laundry facilities and appliances needed updating.





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Actions Taken:

- Original brick foundation was completely repointed.
- A previously added floor jack underneath the building was replaced with a masonry pier.
- Decks were demolished and rebuilt, in a traditional style, but to current Code standards and utilizing materials less susceptible to deterioration.
- Deteriorating exterior wooden clapboard siding was removed, enabling installation of insulation throughout exterior walls (without disruption of interior plasterwork). Exterior sheathing with an integral moisture barrier was then installed, followed by factory-finished fiber-cement clapboards -- thus maintaining an appearance very close to the original while substantially reducing annual energy usage and on-going maintenance needs.
- The front pair of doors were replaced with custom mahogany doors made to match original profiles. Note: While the doors had historically been painted, the owners decided that it would be preferable to showcase the natural beauty of the natural wood instead by using a transparent finish.
- Sidewalks, a mixture of wooden boardwalk and brickwork, were replaced with natural bluestone.
- Wooden flooring in the vestibule, receiving the heaviest traffic use wear, was replaced with travertine tilework – both for sake of durability and to maintain clarity that all remaining wood flooring was original.
- Fireplaces re-fitted with natural gas-fired inserts.
- Exterior windows were re-furbished (with weights and pullies re-built) and storm windows added to improve thermal performance.
- Interior finishes, including plasterwork were repaired.
- Underground propane tank was replaced with piped natural gas service.
- Overhead electrical service to house was changed to an underground electric service for sake of presenting a better and more historic appearance.
- New appliances were obtained for improved functionality and HVAC/ laundry facilities were re-configured for added amenity.

