

**103 Whilldin Avenue - The Tower Cottage - Chip and Sue Weldon
Year Built - 1875**



The Tower Cottage appears to be one of the original structures built on land provided for free to clergy in the original Sea Grove Community development plan. The structure belonging to a “Rev. T. Yaeger” appears on the development’s original map (c. 1877) and was likely built in 1875. Our connection to the cottage began in 2014 when we noticed a sale sign and made a call to see the place. What we found was a vacant home in need of attention yet full of the historic charm described in Joe Jordan’s Walking Tours of Historic Cottages book. We were hooked. However, the journey to today was neither simple nor quick.

Challenges Faced:

1. Seeing our agreement of sale voided by a unexpected foreclosure and subsequent Sherriff’s Sale
2. Competing for a now bank owned property with parties interested in tearing it down, building a new structure, and selling it. We were grateful to prevail and finally settle in January 2016.
3. The house was on the ground on its original pier foundations.
4. Renovations over the years and what was likely numerous inundations from the sea left some of the home’s framing weakened, worn and damaged. Video on YouTube of the 1962 Ash Wednesday storm show the tower cottage full of sand. Today the house sits at an angle on the property as a result of the ocean’s effects.
5. The original tower had been enclosed and converted into a bedroom.
6. The interior was divided into two apartments.
7. The house had no insulation.
8. Heat was attempted by numerous open propane fireplaces.
9. Electric service was a patchwork accumulation of newer and older circuits.
10. Water and sewer lines were likely original.
11. The rear deck and outdoor shower were rotting and in disrepair.



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Actions Taken:

1. Raise the structure and replace the masonry piers with a new foundation.
2. Multiple Structural Modifications to reinforce and replace worn or damaged framing.
3. The interior was taken down and modified into an “upside down” configuration – with the second floor converted into an open living space inclusive of the tower. The first floor now features a center hall and bedrooms. We were deliberate in featuring the beauty of the original structure in this work, retaining the staircase, exposing the original rafters and exposing and restoring the original floors.
4. New HVAC, Electric, and plumbing.
5. New rear deck and outdoor shower.
6. New landscaping, including a raised bed garden backyard.
7. Development of a new level of patience required to endure the “cape maybe” pace of restoration – which started in January 2016 and was completed in May of 2018.

The Tower Cottage was love at first sight for us. We’re honored and privileged to assure it remains a part of Cape May Point’s living history. We’re grateful for the numerous visitors who tell us stories of how the Tower Cottage (or Horse Head Cottage to some) played a part in their lives.

