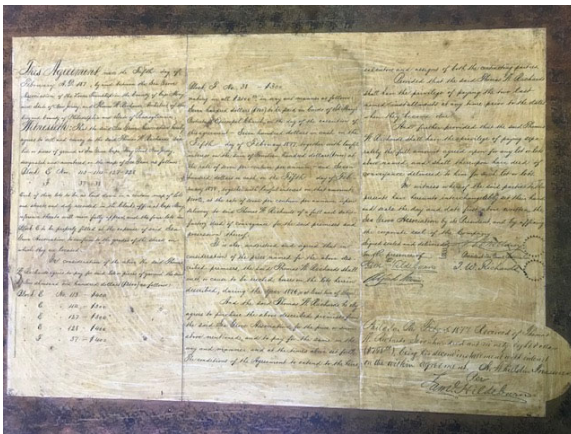


301 Lincoln Avenue - Hilliard Cottage - Penny Pagano and Philip Potter
Year Built: 1876



The current owners have provided the following interesting history of this historic house, relying in part on Joe J. Jordan's *Cape May Point - The Illustrated History: 1875 to the Present*. In 1876, Thomas W. Richards, an architect from Philadelphia, purchased six lots from the newly formed Sea Grove Association of Lower Township in what eventually became the Borough of Cape May Point. Two adjoining lots were on Beach Ave near the intersection with Cape Avenue, and four were on Coral Avenue between Lincoln and Yale Avenues.

The 1876 contract required that at least two of the lots be developed. The best information available indicates that Richards sold the double lot on Beach Avenue to William T. (Thomas) Hilliard, who constructed a house later known as the "Hilliard Cottage" and used as a Friends meeting house from 1886 to 1905. When Hilliard died in the early 1900's, Professor Horace Richards and his sister, Marie Richards, grandchildren of Thomas Richards, purchased the house from the Hilliard Estate. The big 1936 Nor'easter eroded the sand under the house so severely that Horace and Marie would need to move the Hilliard Cottage.



Original deed

Never having been developed, the four original Coral Avenue lots were still owned by the Richards family. The Hilliard Cottage was relocated to their two lots at the intersection of Coral and Lincoln, now 301 Lincoln Ave. The house was moved on rollers pulled by mules, so gently that Marie recounted leaving glasses and dishes on the tables and having none broken. The house was sold in 1968 to James O. and Juanita B. Stevens, who sold the house in 1971 to John B. Pagano, Jr., Priscilla (Pat) Pagano and daughter, Penny Pagano. It then became the Pagano's summer residence. Philip Potter, Penny's husband, acquired an interest in the property in 1990. John and Pat are deceased, but Penny and Phil continue to maintain the house as a summer residence.

Over the years, Penny and Phil have made extensive repairs to the house and have added back the third porch, which was believed to be part of the original house from 1876 but was lost in the 1936 storm and subsequent move. They have maintained the original design of the house, including the distinctive three-story tower whose widow's walk is one of the highest points in Cape May Point. From there one can see the entire Point and, on a clear day, across the Bay to Delaware.



Friends Meeting sign



Original house being moved

Specific Challenges Faced:

- The existing porches were in need of repair. When the house was moved in 1936 due to erosion, it appears one of the three porches fell off. Replacing that original porch and repairing the existing porches required special carpentry and significant structural supports due to new piling requirements, which far exceeded those of the original pilings. This is not standard construction work and takes experienced and patient craftsmen with special skills and experience.
- The three-story tower on the back of the house with a widow's walk is a unique feature of the house and needs to be regularly maintained to control leaks and prevent damage to the ceiling and walls underneath. Damage to the deck and walls from constant sunlight and rain also require periodic repair and replacement.
- The original pilings that support the whole house were not sunk as deeply in the sand as pilings are today, and they have a tendency to sink over time. The entire rear corner fell off its pilings at one point, causing cracks in the plaster on all three floors. Cracks in old plaster/lathing walls and ceilings need repair due to movement of the house during storms or settling of the original shallow pilings and supports for the house.
- Repair of the original single paned windows are challenging because they are tall and narrow and cannot be easily replaced. Any repair needs to be done by a carpenter by hand, as does the woodwork surrounding the windows.
- The exterior is made from old cedar lap siding which requires painting and repair to maintain. There is constant wear to the exterior of the house due to the weather and the house requires repainting at considerable expense every 8-10 years. Areas of the house where the weathering is most severe require more frequent repainting.

Specific Actions Taken:



Recent photos

- The new porch was added in 2007. It was rebuilt front to back on new pilings with significant structural supports that now also support the porch side of the house. New code regulations required installation of a large heavy beam to support the porch roof and structure. This also required special work to integrate the new porch with the old. Special beams were handmade and installed, ultimately requiring replacement of the kitchen roof to make it all fit. The new porch was fully screened in and tall French doors replaced the windows in the dining room, opening this side of the house to the outdoors for dining and relaxing. A door to the kitchen was also added. The design of the new porch followed as closely as possible the original design of the porches and was integrated into the front porch. Railings were added to the porches at this time to reconstruct as closely as possible railing seen in old photos.
- Significant repair and replacement of the deck and interior walls of the widow's walk was initiated. The old and damaged wood inside the walk was removed and replaced with treated and heavily sealed lumber to protect it somewhat from the elements. It is regularly maintained. The original cedar lap siding on the exterior is also regularly repaired and painted to keep the appearance and structure of the original design.
- The sinking pilings were shored up or replaced with concrete piers. Cracks were repaired and the plaster repaired or replaced on lathing where possible. All plaster walls were preserved when possible, but when the damage was too extensive drywall panels were used to replace the plaster. To date the walls and ceilings on the first and second floors have been repaired and repainted. The third floor awaits this repair.
- The windows and frames are repaired as needed by a carpenter. The original glass panes in the windows are protected to preserve all the imperfections of the old glass. The original sash windows use rope, pulleys and weights to raise and lower them. The ropes wear and break at times and are replaced.
- High quality paint is used to withstand the elements at The Point. Some sections require more frequent repainting than others. Although vinyl or other artificial siding would reduce painting costs, maintaining the old cedar siding keeps the integrity of the original house. Paint colors are modified from time to time, varying slightly from the traditional Quaker Gray and white. The house is currently a gray/sage with dark sage trim and white and red accents to bring out the house's special design features.