

2026 CAPE MAY POINT TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

HERITAGE AWARDS: FOUNDERS CIRCLE AWARD NOMINATION

The Founders Circle Award celebrates dedication to preserving the historical integrity of a structure in CMP erected prior to 1900, while sensitively adapting the structure and/or grounds to meet contemporary needs. Anyone may submit this nomination. Nominations should be completed using the format indicated below and should be emailed to pointhelp@cmp-taxpayers.org.

Year of Application: 2026_____

Address of nominated structure: 201 Cape Ave Cape May Point NJ 08212_____

Date the structure was built: 1875_____

Name of nominator: Margaret Flinner _____

Phone number of nominator: 202-607-0809_____

Email address of Nominator: Mflinner@rcn.com_____

Name of homeowner(s) of structure: same_____

Phone number of homeowner(s): same_____

Email of homeowner(s): same_____

Other participants (people and other organizations) and their roles:

Diane Cornell – Wife, inspiration, and the driving force behind the restoration of the Cornell Cottage and its surrounding landscape. Diane's vision for preserving the home's historic character while creating a haven for native plants and wildlife guided every aspect of the project. Although she passed away on January 7, 2020, her legacy lives on through the restored cottage and gardens and through the **Diane Cornell Wildlife Garden Project**, an initiative that offers free educational events and lectures to honor her lifelong love of Cape May Point. The project promotes native gardening, supports wildlife conservation, invasive removal and encourages the preservation of the natural beauty of Cape Island and the woodlands of the Cape May Bird Observatory (CMBO).

Margaret Flinner – Owner and Architect. Margaret provided architectural guidance throughout the restoration, ensuring that improvements respected the home's historic character while thoughtfully integrating modern functionality.

Randy Payne – General contractor and master carpenter responsible for the majority of the cottage's restoration and reconstruction. His exceptional craftsmanship was instrumental in preserving and recreating many of the home's historic architectural details. Randy passed away in 2012.

Josh Nemeth and Dustin Welch, The Wildlife Gardener – Designed and installed the native landscape, including the planting beds and custom planting boxes along Lincoln and Cape Avenues. Their work complemented the historic restoration by enhancing the property's ecological value with native plantings that support birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. *The Wildlife Gardener is no longer in business.*

Photograph(s) of the structure, including any historic photographs and relevant before and after photographs:
See attached Information and photos.

Overview narrative of this preservation initiative, including methods of preservation and/or adaption to the structure and/or grounds:

The Cornell Cottage is a fine example of Queen Anne architecture and one of the original 27 cottages built for Sea Grove's opening in July 1875, making it among the community's oldest surviving homes. Its first owner was Mary A. Supplee, wife of Rev. Enoch Supplee, a founder and treasurer of St. Peter's-by-the-Sea, who also helped move the church to its beachfront site in 1880. Remarkably, over its 150-year history, the cottage has been owned almost entirely by the women of three families, passing from one generation to the next resulting in long periods of family stewardship that helped preserve its historic character across generations.

The Cottage underwent a renovation in 2010 that balanced historic preservation with modernization. A 1974 kitchen addition on the east façade was removed and replaced with a new entry, a one-story sunroom, and adjoining kitchen designed to complement the original architecture.

Aside from this addition, the architectural fabric throughout the remainder of the house has been carefully preserved. Pine heart wood flooring, windows, millwork, and trim remain intact, while deteriorated wall finishes have been sensitively replaced to maintain the home's historic character.

The living room features a mahogany staircase with square newel post, square picket balustrade, and molded handrail an important surviving interior feature that exemplifies the quality of craftsmanship found throughout. The front-facing windows are wood double-hung sash windows featuring Queen Anne border-light upper sashes and interior shutters. Each upper sash is composed of a large central pane surrounded by small square border lights (approximately 4 inches square). The lower sash of each window consists of a single large pane. The living room windows retain their original colored art glass border lights, the study and upstairs primary bedroom windows feature clear glass. The third and fourth bedrooms upstairs have 2 over 2 double hung windows.

The addition features 2-over-2 double-hung wood windows with trim to match the original throughout the house. The cottage retains an original fixed 30 light wood sash window carefully salvaged and reinstalled on the north elevation. To preserve the continuity of the interior, original heart pine wood flooring was harvested from the attic and utilized as the flooring in the new addition.

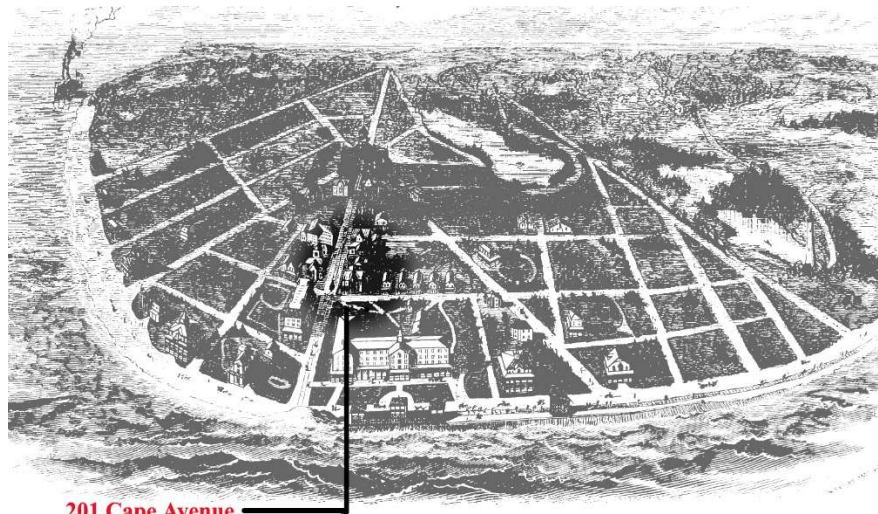
The kitchen includes cherry wood panel cabinetry and a large peninsula island that serves as the center of everyday family life and informal entertaining. The first-floor powder room was updated with a tiled shower, pedestal sink, tile flooring, and traditional beadboard wainscoting in keeping with the home's historic character.

To improve comfort and energy efficiency, high-efficiency HVAC systems replaced the home's costly electric baseboard heating. An attic air handler serves the second floor through discreet ceiling registers, while a second unit in the basement distributes conditioned air to the first floor through underfloor ductwork. This approach provides modern climate control while minimizing its visual impact on the historic interior.

Exterior restoration focused on recovering original architectural details that had been altered over time. Portions of 1980s vinyl siding were removed to reveal the original staggered-edge cedar shingles on the west gable façade, and missing decorative stickwork trim was faithfully recreated. False shutters added in 1980 were removed. The wraparound front porch was restored, removing non-historic alterations and installing custom-milled square columns with eased edges, decorative capitals, and bases modeled after the original design. The addition incorporates custom bargeboard and soffit trim featuring a quatrefoil cutout pattern that matches the original decorative detailing of the 1875 cottage. This recurring quatrefoil motif is echoed in the porch bench and screen door, preserving an important design element of the home's Queen Anne character while visually linking the new construction to the historic fabric.

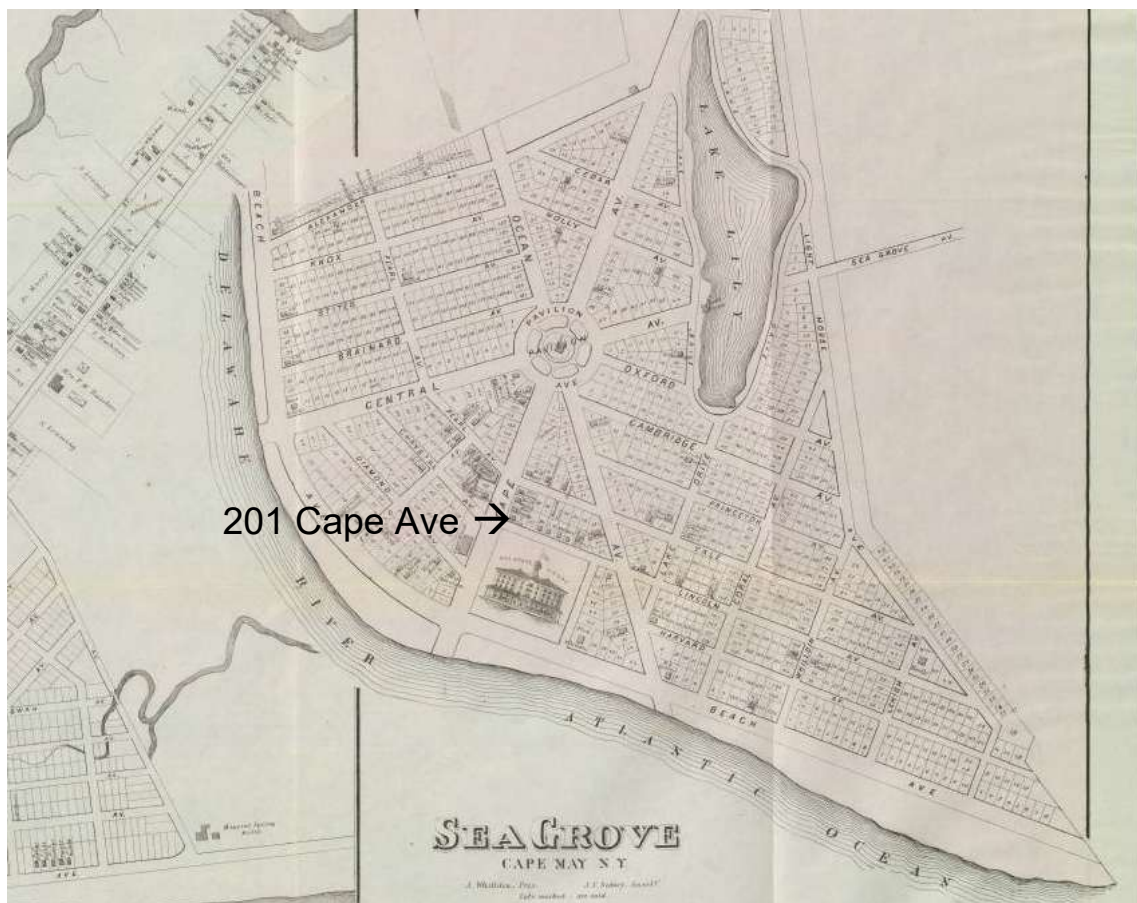
The second-floor balcony was reconstructed with historically appropriate railings and support details based on the cottage's original design, along with a durable waterproof deck surface for long-term protection. Next to it, the widow's walk was restored as a functional "hawk watch," accessed through an operable attic skylight hidden from street view. The 1980's vinyl fish scale siding was replaced with cedar staggered edge shingles as per the original design. This restoration of the upper lookout preserves the home's historic appearance while providing panoramic views and a favorite spot for birdwatching.

Stewardship of the landscape is an ongoing project equal in importance to the restoration of the house itself. The property sits atop a small dune-like rise that had become overrun with english ivy and non-native poplar trees, providing little ecological value for birds, bees, butterflies, and other wildlife. Over time, I have removed the poplars and replaced them with native flowering trees, shrubs, and perennials to restore a healthy coastal habitat. English ivy remains a particular challenge. Although invasive, its extensive root system helps stabilize the dune and protect the cottage from erosion. For that reason, it is being removed gradually and replaced with native plantings, allowing the landscape to evolve while maintaining the stability of this fragile site.



201 Cape Avenue

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF SEA GROVE. FROM THE OCEAN. 1876.



201 Cape Ave →

SEA GROVE
CAPE MAY N.J.

J. Whittier, Prop. J.T. Bailey, Secy.
1876. No. 100 - 101 - 102



1. Cape Avenue Façade (west)



2. View from corner of Cape and Lincoln



3. Lincoln Avenue Façade (south)



4. View from driveway (southeast)



5. East Façade 2010 sunroom addition & new entry



6. View to Garage



7. North Façade



8. Outdoor shower



9. Outdoor shower



10. Front wraparound porch



11. Second Floor Sun Porch



12. Window at bay



13. Porch and hooded window



14. Two story bay



15. Hooded window and stickwork on west gable end



16. Stick work at north gable



17. Enclosed Side Porch



18. Detail at hooded window



19. 2 over 2 sash east facade



20. North tower quatrefoil motif at soffit bargeboard



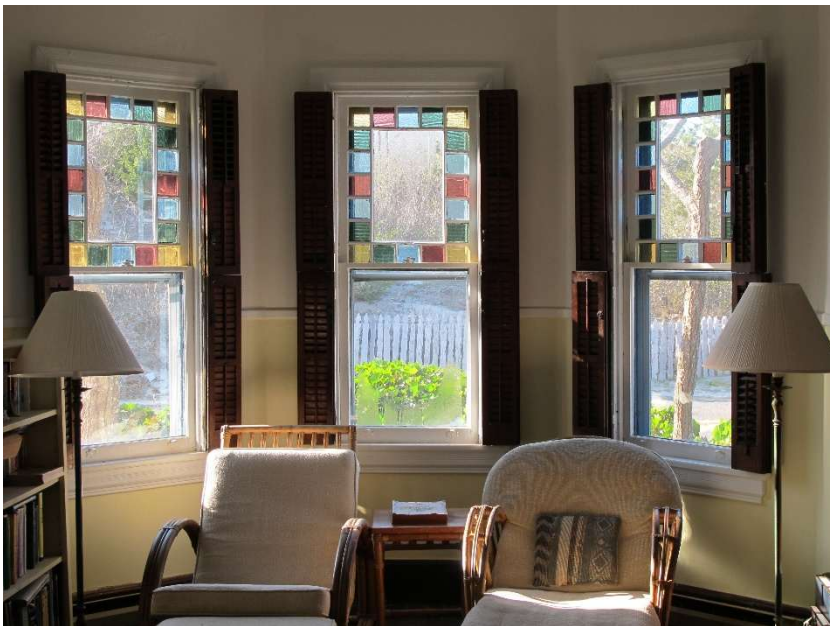
21. Original window reused in new addition



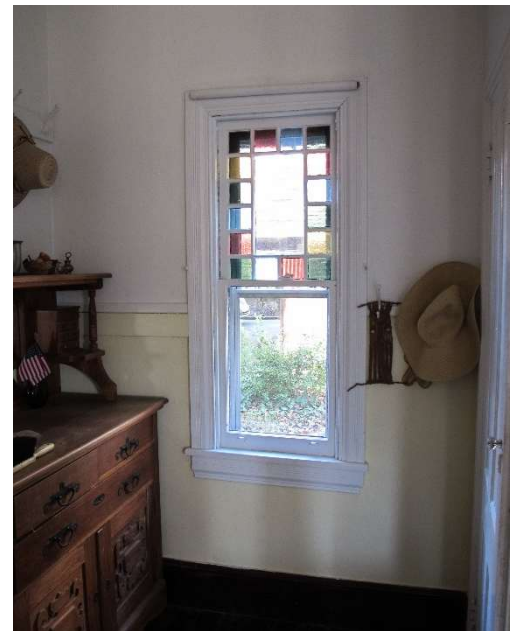
22. Living room Lincoln Ave side and front entry



23. Stair in Living Room.



24. Bay window in Living Room with colored glass



25. Living room window facing north



26. Dining enclosed side porch



27. Study first floor at porch facing Cape Ave



28. Second Floor stair hall



29. Door to 2nd floor porch



30. Bath with clawfoot tub at 2nd floor



31. Primary Bedroom Cape Ave Façade



32. Second Bedroom at Lincoln Ave Bay window



33. Third bedroom South East Façade



34. Fourth bedroom East Façade



34. Wrap around deck



35. Wrap around deck



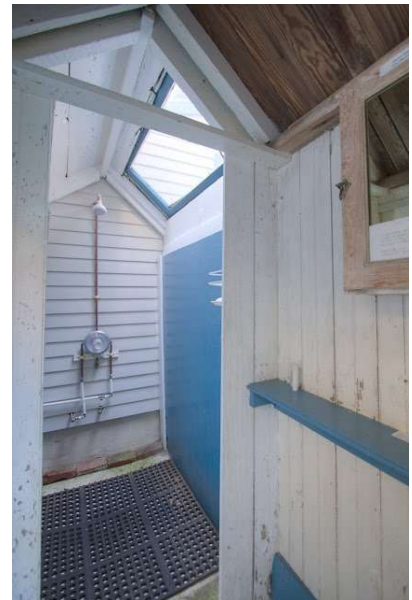
36. First floor Powder Room



37. Kitchen looking toward Sunroom addition



38. Sunroom addition and Kitchen



39. Outside shower

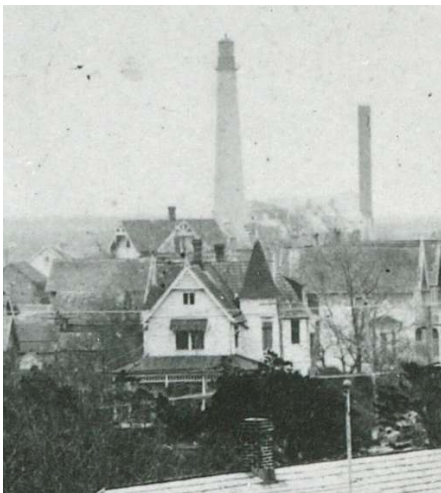
Recently, I found a circa 1890 photograph of Cape Avenue on the Cape May Point Facebook page that included my house (below). It revealed that what we had long assumed was an open widow's walk was once topped by a tall tower roof. The renovation and creation of the Hawk Watch was completed before this came to light. Because the cottage suffered damage from a major fire in 1906, and many hurricane winds after, it seems the tower roof was destroyed and never rebuilt, leaving the open widow's walk that survived into modern times.



40 1890s Lincoln Ave This image depicts a tower rising above the cottage where the widow's walk was thought to be.



41. 1930's photo showing exterior details before tower roof was destroyed



42. 1900s' lighthouse in the background



43. 1888 unidentified women at front porch Shipley-Bringhurst-Hargraves Family papers:



44. 1970 without tower



45. 2008 prior to 2010 renovation