

HGTV program lands in Westbrook

6/28/19

Salt Island Road home featured on Beach Hunters

By Lisa Reisman

WESTBROOK — It was the room numbers on the doors of the beachfront property that intrigued Heidi and Wyatt Teubert. The numbers started at 74 and went to 77.

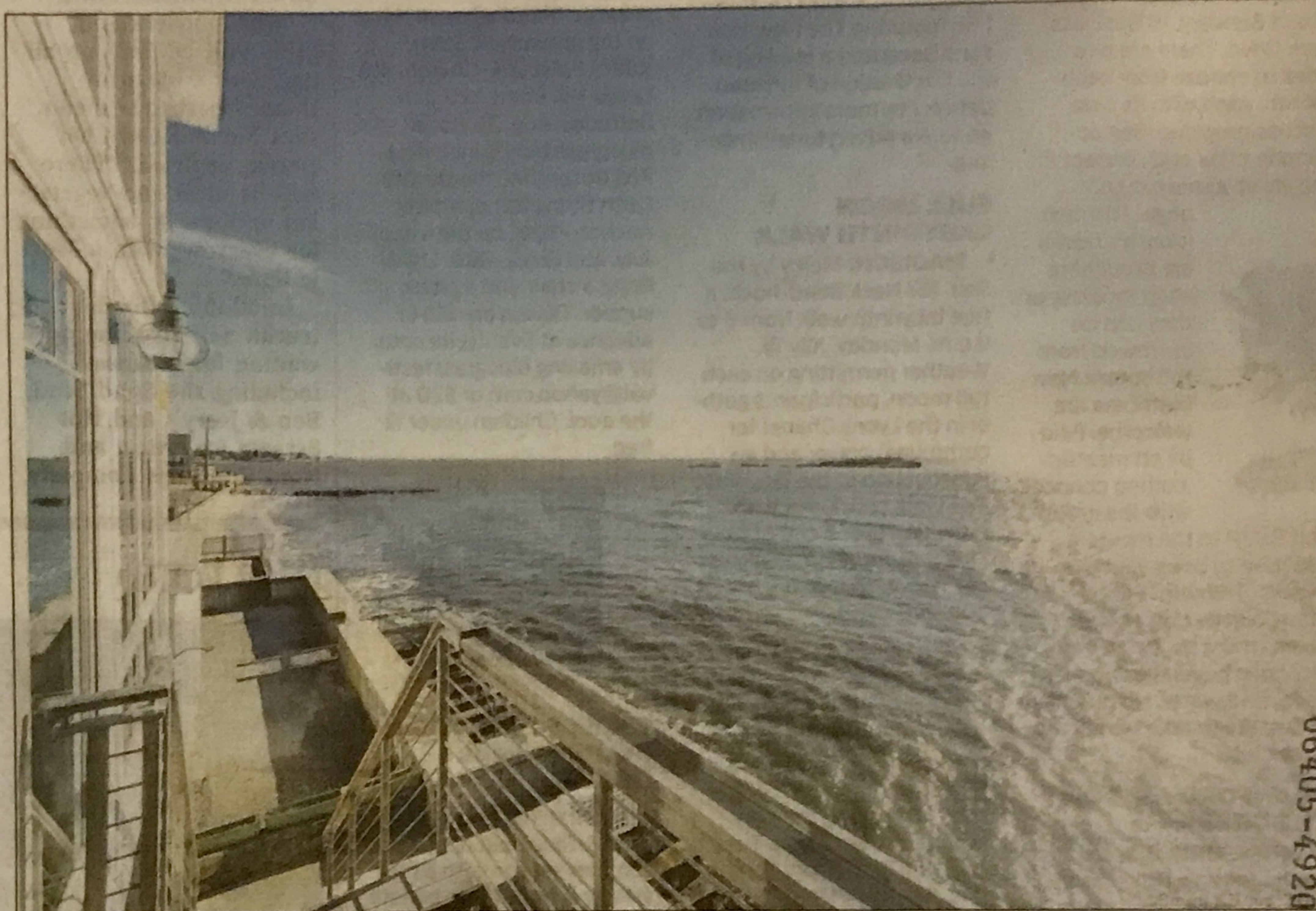
That was more than seven years ago, well before the stem-to-stern renovations that likely inspired HGTV to feature 209 Salt Island Road on an upcoming episode of its popular "Beach Hunters" show.

As it turned out, the room numbers were a portal into a bygone era. Three houses down from the Teuberts was the Castlebrook Inn, a hotel built in 1896, when it was known as Pochoug House.

"People would flock there from cities for its beach even before the turn of the century," said Catherine Doane, president of the Westbrook Historical Society. Following the lean years of the Depression, and the strict food and gas rationing of World War II, the inn saw its heyday from the mid-1940s through the 1950s.

"Guests often remained there for extended periods of time," Doane said. "Typically they were provided with three family-style meals a day, beach privileges, and a variety of social activities like parties and dancing on summer nights. Castlebrook was particularly known for its wedding parties."

See HGTV on A11



Contributed photos

A water view from the exterior of 209 Salt Island Road. Note the Ipe galvanized steel stairs.



An early scene of the Castlebrook Inn in Westbrook.



The middle house is the exterior of 209 Salt Island Road

LAURENCE C. J.

06405-4920

HGTV

From page A1

It was not unusual to have an overflow of guests. Those who couldn't be accommodated were commonly placed in accessory buildings, but had full privileges at the 60-room main hotel.

One of those buildings was 209 Salt Island Road. That explains numbers 74 to 77 on the doors. Adding to their historical significance was a fire of undetermined origin on March 22, 1961, that burned the inn beyond repair.

That the room numbers represent rare artifacts of a largely forgotten time is in part why the Teuberts kept them on the doors. They also kept the original crystal doorknobs and the clawfoot tub and the 1940s-era sink and mirror in a bathroom. When the renovation specialists brought the ceiling down, Heidi told them to leave it be and let the original beams show.

All of those they updated, of course. Indeed, as deeply as the property is infused with history, there were still, for Heidi and Wyatt, improvements to make. There was a seawall to rebuild out of concrete. There was a house to lift 10 feet to comply with FEMA requirements. There were windows and doors to hurricane-proof and stairs leading onto the beach to be constructed from Ipe, a

kind of wood resembling driftwood and resistant to the elements.

"We were staying two houses down, so we were here all day, being a pain in the neck," Heidi said, as a sailboat glided across the water amid ocean breezes wafting across the living room. "We wanted to make this place low-maintenance, energy-efficient and, above all, magical."

That meant installing floor-to-ceiling disappearing sliding doors to "simulate a cruise ship," Wyatt said. It meant remodeling and expanding the deck into two patios—one affording full sun, and another shaded one with a couch and television, and enclosed for dogs and children. It meant upgrading the kitchen and putting in in-floor heating in the bathrooms.

There are some nifty touches: stencils of sailboats on the risers of each stair; a storage shaft with tracks for an elevator from the ground floor to the upper floors; a rare two-car garage, created when the house was lifted; a den with vibrant colors mellowed by original pine floors.

"People come here and they just exhale," Heidi said, as she stood between Room 76 and another immaculate view of the water. "This was a true labor of love."

► The episode will air on HGTV in late July. For more information on 209 Salt Island Road, email Tom Simjian at tsimjian@kw.com or call 203-506-0388.