

**Comstock Cemetery Foundation**  
**-An outdoor museum**

Comstock Cemetery Foundation  
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July 12, 2021

Carla Hitchcock, CCCHP Manager  
State Historic Preservation Office  
901 S Stewart Street, Suite 5004  
Carson City, NV 89701-5248

**RECEIVED**

**JUL 14 2021**

**STATE HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION OFFICE**

Dear Carla,

Attached is an overview for our plans for the bathroom.

We have spent the past few weeks talking with some experts on the application of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*, interpretation, and structural issues. We will be submitting a written overview of our interpretative plan for the structure and how it is positioned to meet the Standards. We thought this would be helpful in preparation of our CCCHP Board Review for the installation of:

- Sliding door
- Modern Pressed Tin

However, there is much work still to be done in the bathroom with the subflooring evaluation and mold treatments. So, we are not at a standstill so to speak. The door suggested can be hinged or rigged to slide, so you can evaluate the look and it can be used in any case. It is real wood, and solid as are the remaining existing external doors which were "original" but still a salvaged feature.

Sincerely,

Candace Wheeler  
Executive Director  
Comstock Cemetery Foundation

C: Ross Bevans, President

## Bathroom Documentation Field Observations, Stabilization and Treatment

Ron Gallagher, prior owner and landlord, documented names of the renters, and work performed on the house. Three other houses were owned by his family during his childhood up until the move to the cemetery. There are two local handymen, one still living, who periodically did work on the rental properties. They were interviewed in 2018. Ron's family managed the property for almost 90 years, and he took over direct management in the 1980s following his father's death. Mr. Gallagher is still living and completed a full oral history, numerous walk throughs, and continues to consult on the project. As various discoveries were made in the bathroom area he was contacted for additional information.

### General Observations

We will use this bath "room" to gain some additional storage, and create an opportunity to address the history of mining. It will not be a public use toilet. As with all rooms it will tie into our interpretive plan. In part, the bathroom will be altered for a new use. Storage of records and materials will be needed and the bathroom will serve that purpose without altering its defining characteristics: salvage and reuse. The bathroom construct is not original to the structure and is a new modern creation.

### Bathroom Floor

No part of the bathroom is historic. The bathroom was created by adding a dividing wall with a doorway and cutting out the second-floor treatment (rough-hewn plank lumber) and replacing it with a combination of OSB, hardboard materials to create a subfloor. Initially the floor was covered in slate-like earth tone tiles. Later, linoleum may have been used, however the small remaining fragments don't appear to have been affixed but simply laid down.

**Treatment Plan**-The contractor will evaluate whether a new subfloor needs to be added-if they are able to remove old tile-paste fragments that will be helpful. We do plan to add stability piers underneath the floor given the sagging and stress the water heater had put on the sub-floor. No changes foreseen to the budget. Similar earth tone slate tiles will be installed to maintain a compatible character of materials.

### Wall Repair

At some point dry wall was added to all walls (1960c) and then redone 1990c. We were able to recover paint samples from the first addition of dry wall and molding (1960c). All paint samples have been matched. The walls were a combination of 6 different paint colors in the family grouping of gold-bronze. Our professional painter thinks they were attempting a faux-stone looking surface and may have used a sponge. In some cases new dry wall and molding was just laid over the original 1960 installation which created wavy and uneven walls. Pressed tin was discovered in the back corner (South wall). It could have been installed on the wall and/or the ceiling. It was not apparent and only one fragment remained adhered to the wall.

**Treatment Plan**-Dry wall will be repaired and leveled out where possible. Fragments of old drywall and molding were taken for paint analysis and our painter will match the technique

and colors. We have a standing request for a CCHP Board review of our treatment plan for the south wall which includes the installation of modern pressed tiles. We have revised this treatment in hopes of making it more acceptable. The tiles will be installed on a temporary basis using only upholstery tacks, no glue or adhesive will be applied, the treatment will be 100% reversible, and interpretation will be added to explain the historic use of pressed tin in commercial and residential structures. The found fragment of old pressed tin will be on display in this non-public use room.

### **Facilities-Fixtures**

Toilet and sink cracked and broke during or prior to the house being moved from the B Street location. We are not sure why many of the movable features were left in place such as doors, sinks, water heaters, and other items. Most items were damaged or caused damage to other features. The sink was disposed of shortly after the move and someone donated a sink but it was never hooked up and it is too large to use. Water heater doesn't function and electrical condition is in poor shape-missing the end of its electrical plug at one end and frayed at the other end. It is not in a suitable or safe location. The weight on the hardboard sub-floor was problematic and we have had to move it numerous times to make way for construction work. (Request to dispose was approved)

**Treatment**-Replace toilet and sink. Contractor will add plumbing as needed. However, no hook up to water and/or sewer is planned at this point. Storage will be added as needed.

### **Historic Dividing Wall**

The dividing wall between the kitchen and the bathroom had a square hole cut out of it perhaps to accommodate the water heater but it doesn't appear to be in a good location for that, so we are unsure why a hole was cut. It is located near the floor, approximately 2' x 1'.

**Treatment**-The hole on the kitchen side was and is hidden by the installation of cabinets. The hole on the bathroom side will remain covered with drywall and painted with the rest of the wall.

### **Molding**

Three different sizes of molding have been discovered including the blue painted base and crown molding. Just fragments remained, however it was all pine and we are able to determine the size of the wood used on both crown and base board. Most door-window molding cracked and/or fell off during move as it was salvage-reused materials. We have been assured this is not due to any structural weakness but rather poor molding material (reused), poor initial installation practices, and structural stress during the move.

**Treatment Plan**-Molding will be replaced in kind, pine, and of a similar size. For the bathroom the blue color will be re-applied.

### **Window**

The window was added in the late 1980s when the bathroom was created from part of the bedroom area. The opening and the window are not historic. The window has been repaired twice to no avail due, in part, to the fact that the window was taken from another structure.

Another example of reuse and salvage on the Comstock. (Permission to replace with a pine window was approved)

**Treatment plan**-Window will be replaced by our contractor, with a pine window specifically built to fit as it is a non-standard opening.

### **Non-historic Wall and Door**

The entrance wall into bathroom is not original, created late 1980s when outhouses were outlawed. That wall cracked and was not put together very strongly. The door has fallen off and cracked. It looks as if it is from a historic period, but it is hollow and the contractor didn't think it was even real wood so it could have been a reproduction. In any case, the wall and door opening are not historic. The door itself is not historic to the structure but rather salvaged from another location/building. It was not part of the house and most likely another example of reuse and salvage on the Comstock.

By opening the door into the bathroom we lose 12 square feet of bathroom space. The same is true if we reverse the door and open it into the meeting room (bedroom). In the bedroom it would open against the backdoor and we lose space in an already small room. In the bathroom, when using the toilet, the door would bump up against the occupant's knees.

We think the first bathroom door used in that space may have been from the old outhouse-but we just have oral history to confirm that and some hinge holes that show at least one door replacement was made.

**Treatment**-We will go to the matt to get this treatment plan approved. We have a standing request for a CCCHP Board review of our treatment plan for installation of a sliding door. We would like to utilize a sliding door-not a pocket door as the wall construction is not suitable. There were many sliding and/or barn doors used on the Comstock especially in the more industrial buildings. This adaptation is tied to the new usage of the space. And, given its mining history, the more industrial feel is compatible with its character of the evolutionary salvage and reuse.

Today, you can see the marks of the sliding hardware around town, but most hardware has been taken for resale or reuse. The sliding mechanism is simple and can be removed at any point. The installation is reversible, and the door that is planned could be hinged at any point. The door will fit the character of the building and be constructed of pine, newly purchased. We are searching for the correct size however the contractor can adjust to fit if needed (see picture).

Contractor will customize some shelving for storage in each corner. It will be simple, and constructed of wood. There is no storage in the structure. Under the goals of our adaptive reuse plan the bathroom will provide extra record and supply storage. An armoire that was in the house is planned to fit on the east wall to provide more storage and utilize a remaining feature.



*Modern bathroom floor next to historic subfloor*



*Poor hardboard subfloor in Modern Bathroom*



Material Fragments from Bathroom

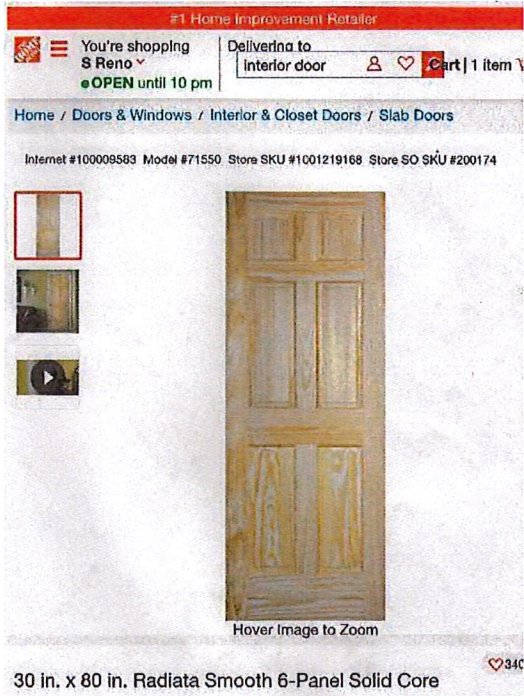
Small tile piece



Pressed Tin Fragment      Dry Wall fragments; paint analysis done



Barn Door Sample-Hardware Stolen  
B Street, Virginia City



Door to be Used  
Waiting on Approval for Barn Door



