

RESTORATION OF THE HISTORICAL MORMON TITHING GRANARY *Santa Clara, Utah*

In October, 2010, Daniel and Helen Nevot with their daughter and son-in-law, Pat and Wayne Johnson purchased the property that includes the Historical Mormon Tithing Granary. The history of the small building is part of the fabric of the community from its earliest establishment so, they decided it must be restored. The Granary is listed as being built in 1902 or '03, but new information has come to light that it was actually built in 1864 or '65, on orders from Brigham Young to help establish the church in the new community. In recent times, the structure had fallen into disuse and disrepair.

The Granary has been restored with a strong emphasis on preserving the historical look and in keeping with tradition, while making it a viable, though small, place to have a beautiful, welcoming, intimate business. After the design and planning of Wayne Johnson, who owns and has restored two historical buildings in Sanpete County, Orson Kimball, a recognized architectural restorer, was engaged to do the restoration. They surveyed the state of the Granary, noting the basic construction, condition of the roof, floor, windows and doors. Orson's extensive knowledge of old traditional construction methods and materials in Utah was extremely important to the restoration.

The foundation is constructed of lava rocks. They are strong and don't absorb water. The rest of the walls are of limestone blocks. The mortar in between the limestone blocks was deteriorated and crumbly. This required extensive re-pointing (replacing the affected mortar with new mortar) in fact, nearly 5000 lbs by the time it was completed. Mr. Kimball researched and found the formula for the mortar that had been used in the original building. By using the same formula, the expansion would be the same throughout the building. The original roof was corrugated tin sheet nailed to the rafters. No electricity was used in the early pioneer times and no insulation. Wayne solved those problems by devising a ceiling that would be in keeping with the original, providing for insulation and concealing the electrical wiring. The roof consists of rough-sawn lumber, 2" foam sheet, roofing paper and ice barrier with the original tin reinstalled on top.

Gutters were also added to further protect the foundation and the building. Regular gutters were used, but were sheathed in rough-sawn lumber. Down-spouts were not used back then, so chain was used since it was commonly used by the Pioneers and early settlers to direct the water to the ground.

The floor in the basement was dirt. It had accumulated over a foot of dust dirt and debris over the years. This was dug out and cement was poured to seal and stabilize the area. The floor of the upper level had some damage and some of the original flooring was replaced using the same rough-sawn lumber. It was sanded, stained and then sealed so it is indistinguishable from the old original boards.

The walls in the basement were completely unfinished, so the only restoration done at this level was the re-pointing. The rough Lava stone blocks are very "organic" looking so they were left exposed. The walls of the upper level were originally plastered. They were in a good enough state that the parts that were showing the under structure were minimal. It was decided to clean and seal the original walls so that they would not deteriorate further and would not "powder" when touched, plus it allows the structure underneath to be seen.

The original window opening was covered by a screen that had deteriorated badly and the window frame was beyond saving. Mr. Kimball built the window frame with the rough-sawn lumber. Then He constructed the window using the original glass from the door in the basement. He added other vintage glass to complete it. The two small windows in the basement were open with only bars over them. Small windows were made to cover the openings to make the basement weatherproof, and then the bars were carefully replaced to retain the original look. The doors of both the basement and the upper level were beyond repair, so Orson built sturdy doors that were like the original doors. He salvaged and rebuilt the lock for the upper level door. The doors were finished to match the originals. All of this work was hand constructed by Mr. Kimball

There had been a porch-like structure that covered the stairs leading to the basement. It had fallen down many years ago and no pictures were available to try to match it. Wayne designed a simple tin roofed structure that follows the roof line of the Granary that replaced this structure. The basement stair treads are made of rock and have been heavily worn over the years. Since the stair well to the basement lacked a handrail and any protective fence, these items were built. The pattern for the protective fence and gate were built using an old world design in keeping with the vintage decor. The handrail was installed to complete the safety features. The door of the upper level is about three and a half feet above ground level, but, to our knowledge, there have never been any stairs. The speculation is that the wagons would have come up to the door to off-load the corn, grain etc. This is no longer practical, so the same old-world design was used to construct a double stairway with a landing at the top to provide access to the building. Again all of these features were hand constructed by Mr. Kimball.

It has been quite a challenge to restore the Historic Mormon Tithing Granary and to be able to put it back to use as a viable, yet historic building. Our hope is that the building will be preserved in this way and can be enjoyed by the community for years to come. We are glad to have made a contribution to the historical preservation effort in Santa Clara.

Special thanks to:

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