

Corvair 95: Stock was. . .

2 - Front and Side Doors

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The Stock Was . . . series is exploring design modifications to our favorite vans and pickups. This second installment will look at modifications to front and side door components.

Front doors

The front doors did not see much change over the 4 years of FC production, although several changes were directed toward preventing rain penetration. And while it's technically not part of the door, among those efforts we might include the addition of the rain gutter along the windshield pillars in 1962 to divert water away from the doors. Early 61 FCs had a weatherstrip (#3778499) attached to the door itself. It is shown but not labeled on page 113 of the '61 assembly manual and noted as removed. Its deletion, noted in the 1962 Truck Engineering Features booklet, was "a result of tests

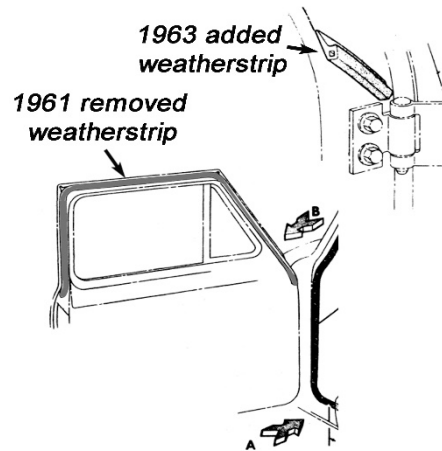


Figure 1. Front door weatherstrip.

which indicate adequate door sealing is provided with the remaining door opening seal". But sealing apparently was not adequate and persistent water seepage was addressed in 1963 by adding of a short piece of weatherstrip across the door jamb (Figure 1).

The vent window assembly in one of the more complicated of the door components, as anyone knows who had rebuilt one. It appears that in early '61 the engineers made changes necessitating different part numbers - 3775843-4 was replaced by 3788043-4 (4/1961) and then by 3797907-8 (7/1961; which is pretty much begins with the '62 model), which is the design given in all the Assembly Manuals. The engineering drawing also exists for the final design, but not the others, so it would take some direct inspection to see what differs between early and late vent window assemblies. Any volunteers?

Side doors

The willingness of the side doors of my '61 8-door Greenbrier to pop open when traveling over a rough road surface has long created anxiety. The problem is that its first design side door strikers (# 3778927) have a single locking notch over which the door can jiggle free, especially with a well-aged latch mechanism. GM



Figure 2. Side door

recognized the problem early-on and the new strikers (#3796765) introduced mid-1961 incorporated two notches to receive the latch pawl, greatly reducing the potential for the doors to suddenly swing open (Figure 2). Better, but still somewhat flimsy, the metal did not hold form well with repeated impact from the door bolt. The third generation door striker (#3848735) introduced in 1964 used much thicker gauge steel and the bolt holes were also enlarged allowing a greater range of adjustment. Also, the gap between the two catches was eliminated, probably to allow easily closing of the doors. As the 1964 Truck Engineering Features book explains, the side doors strikers were shortened to allow easier closure of the doors. Since the strikers did not extend downward as far, the gap between the catches was no longer necessary.

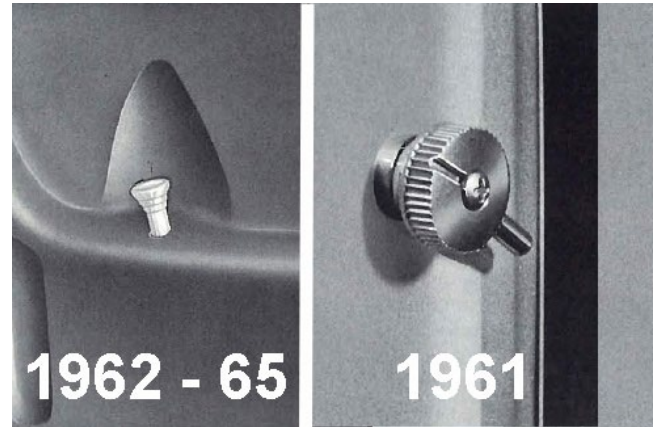


Figure 3. Side door locking mechanisms.

In 1962 several additional changes were made to the van side doors, including a redesign of the door latching and locking mechanism. The small twist-style inner door lock mechanism on the inner panel was replaced with a push button mechanism that extended through the inner door trim panel (Figure 3). The key lock on the outside of the forward intermediate door was also eliminated. Originally, the rear side door was opened from the inside with a “flipper”-like handle located on the door jamb (Figure 4). This was redesigned for the 1962 model year to be a standard type handle and relocated to from the jamb to the inside panel.

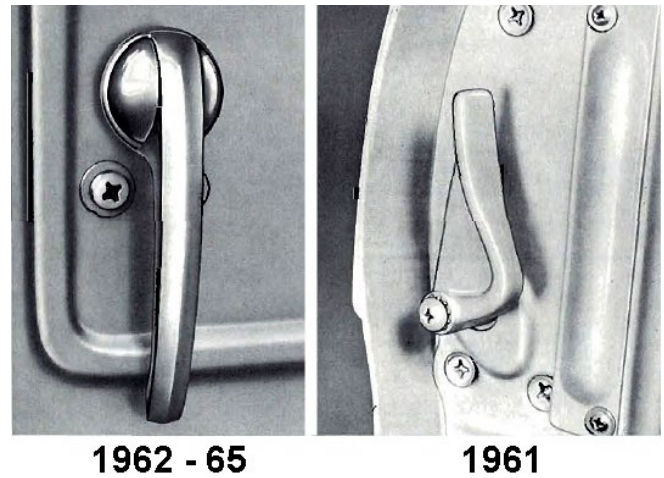


Figure 4. Inside door handles

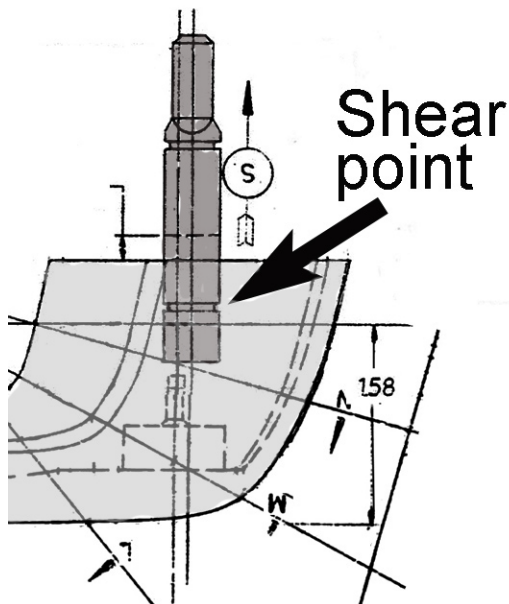


Figure 5. Outside door handle.

However, for reasons still unclear, some 1962 FCs continued to receive rear side doors with the '61 style flipper handle, which is particularly common among 8-door vans. Most likely, the factories were using remaining stock of '61 style doors, particularly of the left side doors. Indeed, I have seen a left-side front door of a '63 8-door greenbrier that was a '61 door with a factory plugs filling the holes for the exterior and interior locks.

Some of the changes I've been discussing here were first described by Bob Kirkman, the Corvair engineer who served as CorvanAntics Technical Editor for many years. One of the more interesting design "tweaks" he described was to the outside intermediate door handles. For the original handles (3787331-2) it was found that with enough force applied on the handle the door could be forced open even if locked. To prevent this, a shear requirement was added to the design, causing the handle to break if too much force was applied (Figure 5). According to the engineering drawing (3796367-8) of the modified door handles, the shaft will shear at 450-650 lbs of torque.

Also, the rubber bumpers of intermediate door handles were originally glued on. Very quickly this proved to be unsatisfactory, and in November 1960 Technical Service Bulletin DR455 was released with instructions for attaching the bumpers with screws. The redesigned handles were all outfitted for screw-on bumpers.

In June 1962, the intermediate door hinges were modified.

Originally, each hinge leaf had two slots, one for each of the hinge bolts (Figure 6). Because hinge leaves have different shapes and the upper and lower door hinges are different sizes, and when assembled the head of the pin must face upwards, to use a hinge on the optional left side doors, the pins needed to be removed and the hinges reassembled. Hinges with a modified design were used beginning late '62; because the spacing between the holes was changed, the hinges cannot be switched between different years.



Figure 6. Side door hinges.

The "door jamb extension assembly" (#3844821-2) became part of the Deluxe Trim (RPO Z60) equipment in 1964. These metal panels covered the opening between the side doors to prevent passengers from snagging or soiling clothing on the door jambs (Figure 7). I believe that these were originally only used on FC taxicabs, part of the RPO 420 package, where they were referred to as "door striker covers".

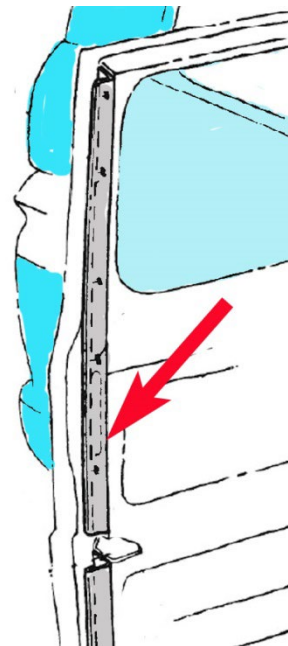


Figure 7. Side door jamb extension