State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code 3CS
Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 1455 Bush Street

P1. Historic name of building (if any): George H. Woodward automobile machine shop
P2. Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted
*b. USGS 7.5' Quad _____ Date _____ T ___; R ___; ____¼ of ____¼ of Sec ____; _____B.M.
c. Address 1455 Bush Street City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 670, lot 20

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

This is a two-story brick masonry building that fills the width of its 50-foot wide lot. The façade is clad in textured bricks that vary subtly in hue from tan to brown. The top of the building takes the form of a parapet that curves upward to become slightly taller end piers. Below the parapet is a profiled cornice with a course of dentils. In several places the brick walls are slightly recessed to form rectangular panels; this occurs beneath the cornice, to either side of the second story windows, and in the spandrel area between the stories. In composition, the façade is divided into two bays. In the second story, each bay has a four-part window with three wooden mullions and double-hung wood sash. In the first story, a large storefront window is at left and a vehicle entrance of equal size is to the right. Both openings possess transoms (now filled with signage) with original transom bars. The storefront window at left has original profiled metal framing and three dividers, one of which is original or early, and the other two of which are replacements.

*P3b Resource Attributes: HP8 – industrial building

*P4. Resources Present: ■ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)
View looking south
June 2009

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1913, ca. 1914; building permit, Sales Ledgers

*P7. Owner and Address:
LANG FAMILY TRUST
30 FANNING WY
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94116

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)
William Kostura
P. O. Box 60211
Palo Alto, CA 94306

*P9. Date Recorded:
August 2009

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
intensive

P11. Report Citation*: (Cite survey report.) William Kostura. *Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures*. San Francisco Department of City Planning, 2010.

*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ■ Continuation Sheet ■ Building, Structure and Object Record
☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record
☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (List)

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

 ***NRHP Status Code** 3CS

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 1455 Bush Street

B1. Historic Name: George H. Woodward automobile machine shop

B2. Common Name:

B3. Original Use: machine shop for auto parts B4. Present Use: fitness training, sewing

***B5. Architectural Style:** Classical Revival

***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

The western half of this building was built in 1913. The eastern half was added in ca. 1914.

***B7. Moved?** ■ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown **Date:** _____ **Original Location:** _____

***B8. Related Features:**

none

B9a. Architect: unknown b. Builders: McWhirter and Drake (brickwork); Frasier and Frasier (carpentry, millwork, sheet metal)

***B10. Significance: Theme** automobile industry **Area** San Francisco

Period of Significance 1913-1960 **Property Type** automobile machine shop **Applicable Criteria** 1, 2

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

This 50-foot wide building was constructed in two parts. The western 25-foot portion of the building was constructed in 1913 for owner George Woodward. A year later, in August 1914, Woodward purchased the 25-foot lot adjacent on the east and soon afterward built the eastern half of this building in matching style. The construction probably occurred in late 1914 or early 1915; city directory listings and a Sanborn insurance map prove it was complete by 1918.

The original owner, George H. Woodward, occupied the building as a machinist of auto parts from the date of its construction until 1946. The 1921 city directory gives some detail, stating that Woodward performed crankshaft and cylinder grinding and manufactured piston rings and wrist pins here. The 1929 Sanborn map more concisely labels this building as a "piston factory." Woodward remained here until 1946. For a few years, from at least 1918-1921, he leased part of the building to Petry (Victor) and Brandt (R.), who ran an auto repair shop here specializing in Stevens-Duryea autos.

History

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

***B12. References:**

Building and Industrial News, March 25, 1913, 18:1
Edwards Abstracts, March 20, 1913
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1908-1964
1919 Sanborn map (machine shop, auto repair, 1455-1465 Bush)
1929 Sanborn map (piston factory, 1455-1465 Bush)

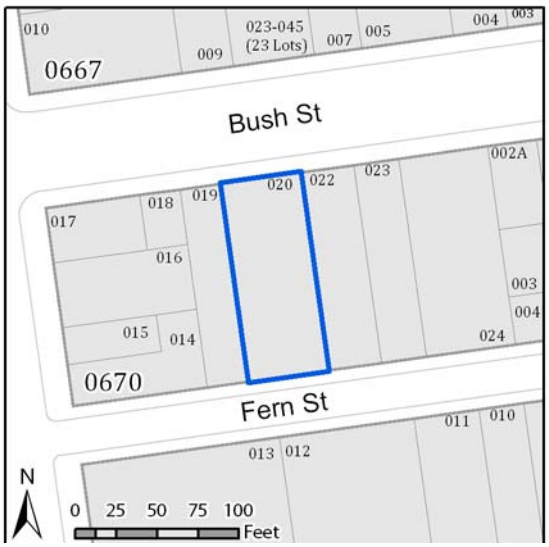
B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** William Kostura

Date of Evaluation: August 2009

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)



History (continued)

Woodward had worked as a machinist in San Francisco during 1902 to 1905. In 1904 his employers were Leavitt and Bill, who owned a bicycle shop at 307-309 Larkin Street and then began, at this time, to sell automobiles as well. It is possible Woodward helped them to make the automobiles they sold. During 1907 and 1908 Woodward became a dealer in automobiles himself, and from 1910 to 1912 he owned an auto repair and machine shop at 31 Hyde Street. He then constructed 1455 Bush Street as his new auto parts machine shop.

With his location near Van Ness Avenue, Woodward was well-located to supply the dozens of auto repair shops and auto dealerships in the vicinity with custom-made or refurbished automobile parts. He was probably one of the few machinists in San Francisco who did so. Although Woodward was one of dozens of machinists in San Francisco, he was one of only a few within the study area (close to Van ness Avenue). In 1914, the year after this building was built, he was one of fourteen machinists in the study area, out of 94 in the city. In 1921 he was the only machinist in the study area, out of 84 in the city. Most machinists were located South-of-Market, and probably did not specialize in automobile parts.

Only three other buildings in the study area still stand that served as machine shops for any length of time. The only early example is 1045 Polk Street, which was occupied by a machine shop from its construction in 1924 through 1937 (thirteen years). Two other buildings, at 155 Fell and 159 Fell, were occupied as a machine shop and by an auto parts manufacturer briefly in the 1940s-1950s.

The occupants of this building, 1455 Bush, from 1947 to 1952 are unknown. From 1953 to at least 1964 the C. A. Malm Trunk Factory occupied the western portion of this building (which then had an address of 1465 Bush). The eastern half of this building (#1455) was occupied by auto parts stores (British Auto Parts, in 1953; Shaw and Shaw Auto Parts, in 1960).

To summarize, this building was occupied by an auto parts machinist, George H. Woodward, for 33 years, from 1913 to 1946; and afterward had a divided use, as auto parts sales and a trunk and luggage factory.

Integrity

Alterations to the façade of this building have been minor. It retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.

(Continued on page 4.)

Evaluation

This is one of more than 100 buildings along the Van Ness Avenue corridor that have a history as automobile support structures, and that are being evaluated for possible historic significance according to the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources. With a few exceptions, these buildings were auto showrooms, public garages, auto repair shops, auto parts and supplies stores, and auto painting shops. The time period that is being studied is from the initial years of the automobile industry in San Francisco through 1964. Among the factors that have been considered when evaluating a building are its date of construction, its longevity of auto-related use, the importance of its occupants in local auto industry history, integrity, and architectural quality. These factors, and how they apply to evaluations of buildings, are discussed in a cover report, *Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures, 1908-1964*.

This is one of the oldest auto-related buildings in the study area, and it had a total of 47 years of longevity for all auto-related uses (to 1960). It is, as well, by far the best example of an auto parts machine shop that still stands, and it had great longevity – 33 years – as this use. For these reasons, the building appears to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources at the local level under Criterion 1. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1913-1960.

This building also appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2, for its association with George H. Woodward. He was one of the earliest auto parts machinists in San Francisco, and he was probably the longest lasting as well. His career may represent, better than that of any other machinist in San Francisco, the period before World War II, when auto parts were made locally, in order to repair the many dozens of brands of automobiles that were in existence then, and were not just shipped around the country from a few central shops. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1913-1946, when Woodward's shop was here.

Under Criterion 3: This building is mostly conventional in its treatment. It does have some elements that are effective, most importantly the texturing of the brick, the use of tan and brown hues, and the recessed panels in the wall surface. The cornice, grouped windows, and symmetrical composition are also pleasing. The integrity is also high. Overall, it does not appear that the building quite rises to the level of distinction necessary to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building are the textured brick wall surface, with its coloring and recessed panels; the cornice and dentil course; the four-part windows with their wooden mullions and double-hung wood sash; and the storefront window with its transom and original profiled framing.