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) 550 Turk Street

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Admiral Garage
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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 550 Turk Street City San Francisco Zip 94102
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 741, lot 5

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

This two-story, reinforced concrete, stucco-clad building fills the width of its 68'-9" wide lot. In composition, the façade is symmetrical and divided into two bays, each of which is dominated by a vehicle entrance in the first story. One entrance leads to the ground floor, and the other leads to the second floor. In the upper story, each bay is further divided into four subordinate sections, with one window per section. The top of the building is spanned by (from top to bottom) a paneled parapet; a profiled cornice embossed with a molding of linked ovals; courses of egg-and-dart, bead, dentil, and calf's tongue moldings; a frieze filled with plaster rinceaux; and another course of egg-and-dart molding. In the second story, windows have industrial steel sash and are divided by slightly receded piers. The four-part window group in each bay is enframed by a twisted rope molding the detail of which has been obscured by repeated painting. Gothic tracery fills the four curvilinear panels in the spandrel area of each bay. The major piers that define the two bays are decorated with shields (near the top of the building), thick, spear-like ornament at the spandrel level, and recessed panels near the bottom.

*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 north
June 2009

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1924; building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
ISHISAKI TSUTOMU B HWEE STE
718 MASONIC AVE
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94117

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

*P9. Date Recorded: November 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)

Detail of parapet, cornice, frieze, window, and spandrel

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 3CS

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 550 Turk Street

B1. Historic Name: Admiral Garage
B2. Common Name: _____
B3. Original Use: public garage B4. Present Use: public garage
***B5. Architectural Style:** Classical and Gothic revivals
***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Built in 1924.

***B7. Moved?** ■ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown **Date:** _____ **Original Location:** _____
***B8. Related Features:**
none

B9a. Architect: none b. Builder: Joseph Pasqualetti (American Concrete Co.)
***B10. Significance: Theme** automobile industry **Area** San Francisco
Period of Significance 1924-1964 **Property Type** public garage and auto repair shop **Applicable Criteria** 1, 3
(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

History

This building was built in 1924 as an investment by the owner, Joseph Pasqualetti. Pasqualetti was a prolific builder who, during the 1920s, built buildings of reinforced concrete under the name American Concrete Company, for himself as well as for clients. He often performed the design of his buildings in-house, as was the case here. Within this study area Pasqualetti also built a garage and auto-repair shop at 1565 Bush (1923) and 1575-1595 Bush (1922-1923); outside the study area, he built garages at 445 Fillmore and 3220 Sacramento. Among his fine apartment buildings is the Red Stone Apartments, at 1450 Greenwich.

550 Turk held two businesses simultaneously most years from the completion of construction through at least 1935. The 1929 Sanborn map indicates the first story was occupied then by a public garage with a capacity of 120 cars, and the second story was occupied by an auto repair shop.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 3.)

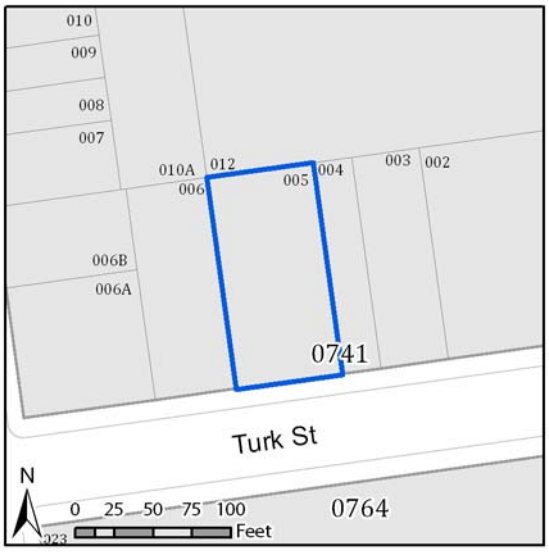
B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) _____

***B12. References:**
Building permit #130623 (August 28, 1924)
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1926-1964
1929 Sanborn insurance map

B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** William Kostura
Date of Evaluation: November 2009

(Sketch map with north arrow required)



(This space reserved for official comments.)

History (continued)

Known occupants of this building have included:

Garages:

1926: August C. LaBud
1927: Admiral Garage
1928-1934: Emil Diethelm
1935: Mrs. Joy Diethelm
1941-1948: Bethel J. Martin, Admiral Garage
1957: John and Carl Hicks, Admiral Garage
1964: Admiral Garage

Auto repair shops:

1927: Admiral Repair Shop
1929: E. W. Personius
1930: Morrison and Surdez
1934: Cook and Wintermantle
1935-1939: Bethel J. Martin
1947-1962: Bethel J. Martin, as Martin's Automotive Service

For most years, city directories listed businesses by the names of their proprietors rather than by the business name. Although documentation is incomplete, it seems likely from the above that the building itself was known, either formally or informally, as the Admiral Garage into the 1960s.

As can be seen above, one person, Bethel J. Martin, occupied the building from 1935-1962, using it variously as a garage and repair shop. He had previously (since 1921) worked in San Francisco as an auto mechanic. During his 27 years he owned businesses at 550 Turk he was, except for 1935 and 1957, the only known occupant of the building, and he may have occupied the entire building for nearly all of that time.

In sum, this building had at least 20 years of use as a public garage, at least 21 years of use as an auto repair shop, and 38 years of these combined uses; through 1964, the end year of the period being studied.

Integrity

Except for new vehicle entrance enclosures, the façade of this building has had no known alterations. The building retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Due to new construction in the vicinity since the 1950s it has lost much of its integrity of setting.

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*.

Completed in 1924, this is a moderately early example of a public garage and automobile repair shop. With 38 years of such use in its history (counting through 1964), it has excellent longevity in these uses. For these reasons, the building appears to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1, at the local level, for its use as a public garage and automobile repair shop. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1924-1964, the years the building had these uses.

Only one occupant, Bethel J. Martin, remained here for more than seven years; he was here for 27. Counting his years as an auto mechanic he was active in San Francisco for over forty years. Still, he was not one of San Francisco's earliest auto repair shop or garage owners, and it is difficult to make a strong case for his significance in the field. Accordingly, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2.

Architecturally, this building is an important example of public garage and auto repair shop design. The design is distinguished in two ways. One is the presence of two equally wide and prominent vehicle entrances, one leading to the first story garage and the other to the second story repair shop. Many buildings in the study area held both of these uses simultaneously, either from the beginning of their histories or afterward, but in few if any others does the façade design so clearly indicate this dual use. The other way this design is distinguished is for its very fine ornamental scheme. The façade mixes Gothic and Classical style elements, but the level of detailing is very fine, especially in the cornice area, and the composition is very well-ordered and pleasing. The way the Gothic spandrels drape over the curved vehicle entrances is especially effective. For these reasons this building appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3, for its design. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1924, the year of construction.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building are its height and width, the stucco surface of the façade, the paneled parapet, the cornice with its several layers of decorative moldings, the band of rinceaux in the frieze, the industrial steel sash windows, the Gothic paneled spandrels, the end piers with their shield and spear decorations, and the segmental arched shape of the two vehicle entrances.