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) 1400 Van Ness Avenue

P1. Historic names of building (if any): Earle C. Anthony and William L. Hughson auto showrooms
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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 1400 Van Ness Avenue City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 667, lot 10

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

This four-story, reinforced concrete and steel-frame, stucco-clad building fills its 50-foot by 95-foot lot at the northeast corner of Van Ness Avenue and Bush Street. In composition, the facades are divided into three bays along Van Ness and six bays along Bush. The first story is deeply rusticated to convey a feeling of stone masonry construction. In the upper stories, fluted Corinthian pilasters backed up by unarticulated piers divide the facades into bays. On the Bush Street side, the pilasters are paired.

The cornice is topped by a course in which palmettes alternate with a leaf-and-scroll motif. Beneath this course is the cornice proper, with a bead-and-reel molding running between the cymatium and corona levels. Beneath the cornice are, in turn, a bed molding, a course of dentils, another bead-and-reel molding, and a frieze simply decorated with medallions located over the pilasters.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 2.)

*P3b Resource Attributes: HP6 – commercial building; 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, Bush St. side
June 2009

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1912-1913; published building notices

*P7. Owner and Address:
1400 VAN NESS PTNRS LLC
1160 BATTERY ST
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94111

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

*P9. Date Recorded: January 2010

*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)

Description (continued):

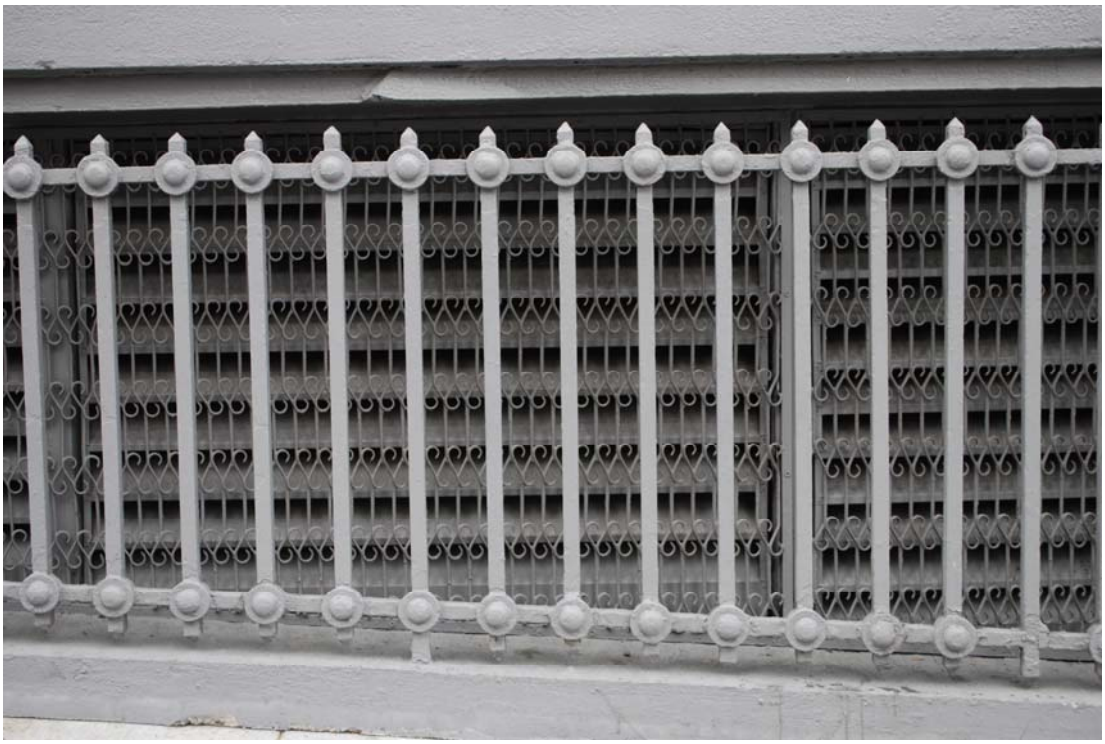
In the third and fourth stories, windows are divided into twelve lights. It is unclear if these window sash are original or are very recent replicas of the originals. If the latter, then the pattern of muntins and lights is the same as it was originally, in 1913. The second story windows are smaller, and are divided into four lights. The first story storefront windows are divided by non-original metal strips into three lights. Spandrels at the third and fourth story levels are paneled, with narrow outer panels and a wide inner panel. The main entrance, centered in the Van Ness Avenue façade, has paired doors with sidelights and a transom that are very similar in their proportions to those that show in a small photograph of 1913 (in the *San Francisco Newsletter*, Christmas number, 1913).

The building's two vehicle entrances were originally in the easternmost bays of the Bush Street façade. One of these (at far right) is still a vehicle entrance with a modern roll-up door. The other is now filled in with a small pedestrian entrance.

An original decorative steel grille, three bays in width, runs along the base of the Bush Street side, providing ventilation to the basement.

Perspective view

Two detail views of the cornice and frieze area



Top photo: Window detail. Bottom: Ornamental grille on the Bush Street side.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 3CS

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 1400 Van Ness Avenue

B1. Historic Names: Earle C. Anthony and William L. Hughson auto showrooms

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: auto showroom B4. Present Use: offices

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

***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Built in 1912-1913.

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

***B8. Related Features:**
none

B9a. Architect: Herman Barth b. Builder: unknown

***B10. Significance: Theme** automobile industry **Area** San Francisco
Period of Significance 1912-1932, 1945-1964 **Property Type** auto showroom **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 – Construction and architect

This building was built in 1912-1913 as an investment for the owner, William Goeggel, a San Francisco resident of whom nothing else is known. The building was intended to be an automobile showroom, and toward this end it was announced in July 1913 that the display area would be finished in pine and hardwoods. The designs were made during July and August, and construction began at the beginning of September 1912. A freight elevator was installed at the end of October; it seems likely the building was completed in early 1913.

The architect was Herman Barth, an important San Francisco architect who trained under Charles Kenitzer and T. J. Welsh, worked in partnership with Kenitzer during 1893-1899, and then worked solo from 1900 to his death in an auto accident in 1923. His practice was diversified, and his works included numerous downtown commercial buildings, two large hospitals (both now demolished), and many residences. Very fine examples of the latter include the Georgian-style Brandenstein residence at 1735 Franklin (1904), 2898 Vallejo (1905), and the Renaissance style Krotoszyner house at 995-999 Sutter (1911). In the study area of this report he also designed automobile buildings at 714 Van Ness and 2050 Van Ness/1675 Pacific (both 1913).

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

***B12. References:**

Building and Industrial News, July 16, 1912, 11:3, and Oct. 29, 1912, 14:2
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1913-1964
1913, 1929, and 1948 Sanborn insurance maps
See Continuation Sheet, p. 14, for more references.

B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** William Kostura
Date of Evaluation: January 2010

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)

Background History

Through the year 1910, nearly all of the important auto showrooms in the study area were located on Golden Gate Avenue, on Van Ness south of Turk Street, or in that general vicinity. In 1911 or 1912 large new showrooms began to be built on Van Ness north of Turk in substantial numbers, and soon the middle and northern blocks of Van Ness became the preferred stretch of Auto Row. 1400 Van Ness was one of the earlier large showrooms north of Turk Street.

Most large auto showrooms in San Francisco were built by investors who leased their buildings to auto dealers. As a rule, a developer did not begin the construction of his building until he had signed a long-term lease with an auto dealer. Often, the lessee negotiated with the developer even before the plans for the building were drawn. This process ensured that the lessee would be able to move into a building that suited his specific needs, and the financial risk to the developer was reduced. In the case of 1400 Van Ness, it appears that a lease for the building was signed after the building was designed, but before construction commenced. As mentioned above, the drawings were prepared in July and August, 1912, a ten-year lease was signed near the end of August, and construction commenced at the beginning of September.

The original occupant remained for less than one of the expected ten years. Such an occurrence was not uncommon on Auto Row, for many auto manufacturers and dealers entered this industry with more optimism than would prove to be justified.

History -- Occupants

1400 Van Ness was occupied by new auto dealerships for seventeen of its first nineteen years. For several years during the Depression the building found use as a used car salesroom. Immediately after World War II it became a new car showroom again, a use that persisted into the 1980s. Three of the auto dealers who had their showrooms in this building were very important locally.

The list of occupants follows:

1913: Consolidated Motor Car Company. This firm, headed by Gustave A. Boyer, sold the Pope-Hartford automobile here. Pope-Hartford was based in Hartford, Connecticut, and had made autos since 1904. Consolidated had been in business in San Francisco since 1908, and had been selling the Pope-Hartford brand since 1910, so both the brand and the local agency had something of a track record. Still, by any measure, Pope-Hartford was a minor auto brand on the national scene, and it seems in retrospect to have been optimistic for Boyer move his dealership into one of San Francisco's grandest showrooms, which this building was upon its completion in early 1913. Less than a year later, in November, Pope-Hartford went into receivership, leaving Boyer and Consolidated with a long-term lease and without a product to sell. Boyer made a trip east to secure the agency for the King automobile, but nothing came of this, and Consolidated had to search for a sub-lessee for this building.

(Continued next page.)

History – Occupants (continued)

1914: S. G. Chapman. Back in 1908 (a few lifetimes earlier in the volatile early auto industry) Steven G. Chapman had been the president and manager of the Consolidated Motor Car Co., and the employer of Gus Boyer. Perhaps Chapman still had some financial interest in Consolidated and needed to protect his investment. At any rate, he took over Consolidated's lease of this building in order to sell the Hupmobile auto, of Detroit, a rather better-known brand than Pope-Hartford. His dealership however was not successful, and his occupancy of this building lasted only from January to May, 1914.

1914-1922: Western Motor Car Company and Earle C. Anthony. In June 1914 the Western Motor Car company moved into this building in order to sell Chalmers automobiles. This was the first prominent firm to occupy 1400 Van Ness. It was owned mainly by Earle C. Anthony, a major California auto dealer since 1904. Here, under first Western's and then his own name, he sold (in rough order of importance) Packard, Reo, Chalmers, Dort, Durant, Grant, and Saxon autos.

The Western Motor Car Company was based in Los Angeles. It had had the southern California distributorship for the Chalmers auto since that Detroit-based brand was founded in 1908. In February 1914, Western Motor acquired the Chalmers distributorship for the rest of California by buying out the Pioneer Automobile Company, which was located in San Francisco and held the northern California distributorship. Upon completion of the deal Western occupied Pioneer's showroom at 515-519 Van Ness, only to relocate, four months later, to 1400 Van Ness.

Chalmers was a handsome, high-priced car that according to Wikipedia "flourished" in the 1910s. Along with Chalmers, Western Motor Co. briefly sold the low-priced Saxon, a separate brand that was manufactured by Chalmers executives.

In January 1915 the silent head of Western, Earle C. Anthony, assumed a more active role in the company. He changed its name to Earle C. Anthony, Inc., but retained Western's San Francisco manager, E. N. Sells. At this time Anthony also acquired the distributorship of the low-priced Grant automobile, a brand that had been founded in Findlay, Ohio two years earlier. For several months he and Sells sold Chalmers and Grant autos from the showroom at 1400 Van Ness.

Anthony seemed to be always searching for the right brands for his San Francisco dealership. Later in 1915 (by October) he dropped Chalmers and Grant and acquired distribution rights to the Reo. Reo was a very popular car founded in 1904 in Lansing, Michigan, by Ransom E. Olds. Olds had previously founded the Oldsmobile brand, but he quickly sold that company and formed a new one. Since his own name was not available to him he named his new car company after his initials. Anthony continued to sell Reo cars at 1400 Van Ness through 1921. In that year, however, Reo took the dealership away from Anthony in order to open its own factory branches in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

From October 1915 through May 1917 Anthony sold only the mid-priced Reo in this building. In June 1917 he added a luxury brand, Packard, to his showroom. Anthony was more than familiar with this auto, for he had been selling it in Los Angeles, Pasadena, and San Diego since 1904, and had established over 100 Packard service affiliates around southern California.

(Continued next page.)

History – Occupants (continued)

The Packard brand had been founded in 1899 by James Ward Packard, William Doud Packard, and George Lewis Weiss. When new investors reorganized the company in 1902-1903 they built a huge, 35-acre factory complex in Detroit designed by Albert Kahn. Packard became one of the premier luxury automobiles in the United States. It was known as one of the "three Ps" of luxury autos, the others being Pierce-Arrow and Peerless.

Although Anthony was solidly established as the Packard dealer in southern California, he could not sell the brand in San Francisco or northern California because another dealer, Cuyler Lee, had that distributorship. The Packard company in Detroit, however, was impressed with Anthony's handling of their car in southern California, particularly with his emphasis on offering good service. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle* ("Selection of New Dealer Is Surprise," June 3, 1917, p. 45), Anthony was the leading Packard dealer west of St. Louis. One has to consider this statement in the light of the relentlessly boosterish tone of newspaper articles about automobiles during this period, but it is clear he was a very successful auto dealer. When it was able to, Packard took the northern California agency away from Cuyler Lee and awarded it to Earle C. Anthony.

As part of his business plan for acquiring the Packard agency in San Francisco, Anthony leased the 70,000 square foot Jerome Garage at Jackson and Polk streets, which was already equipped with up-to-date equipment, to become his new service center in San Francisco. (This building still stands but has been thoroughly altered.)

Anthony added a third brand, the Dort, to his line of automobiles in 1920. He kept that brand for two years. In 1921 he lost the Reo agency. In 1922, his last year at 1400 Van Ness, he sold Packard and Durant cars here.

In that same year, he leased a large portion of the Willys Overland showroom, cater-corner across the intersection at 1335-1395 Van Ness, to use as his service center. Although he had only part of the building, it was a huge building, and his portion of it may have been larger than all of 1400 Van Ness. By 1923 he had moved his full operation to 1335 Van Ness. This was a temporary expedience, for in 1926-1927 Earle C. Anthony built his own very large, Bernard Maybeck-designed showroom at 901 Van Ness Avenue.

<u>1925: Ford Motor Company</u> occupied this building. Why Ford opened a factory branch here for such a brief period is unknown. It also had a thriving local dealership, owned by William L. Hughson, at the time.

<u>1927-1931: Robert A. Smith</u>. Smith was San Francisco's first important Chevrolet dealer. The Chevrolet automobile was founded in 1911 by the former and future head of General Motors, William C. Durant, and the famous auto racer Louis Chevrolet. Durant bought out Louis Chevrolet in 1915, took over General Motors in 1916, and brought the Chevrolet brand into General Motors in 1917. This was GM's low-cost car that was intended to compete with cars of that class made by Ford.

(Continued next page.)

History – Occupants (continued)

Chevrolet was sold sporadically in San Francisco until 1920, when the Anderson-Smith Company began to sell it here. In about 1925 George Anderson left the firm, leaving Robert A. Smith as owner. He continued to sell the car through 1933. Smith's main showroom (through 1931) was at 399 Golden Gate Avenue (demolished), but he had several branch locations over the years. 1400 Van Ness was probably the most important of these branches, and is the only showroom of Smith's in the study area still standing with good integrity.

1932: Phil Davis. He sold new autos of an unknown brand.

1935-1940: Used car sales. Three used car sales rooms briefly occupied this building during these Depression years. Occupants during 1941-1944 are unknown.

1945-1969+: William L. Hughson. This was the last showroom of San Francisco's most important dealer in Ford automobiles.

Hughson sold autos in San Francisco from 1903 until his death in 1967. During his early years he sold several brands of automobiles, including Ford; but from 1919 onward he concentrated on selling Ford and related brands. In his later years he was touted as being the world's first Ford dealer, and for this reason there is a collection of William L. Hughson's papers in the Ford Motor Company archives.

From 1899 into the 1950s he was partner in Hughson and Merton, manufacturers' agents, which initially represented makers of buggies and bicycles, but soon became connected to the automobile industry. It later sold automobile parts to the public, including (in 1909-1915) Ajax tires and Jones speedometers. More research remains to be done on the kinds of products that Hughson and Merton sold or represented.

Early in 1903 William L. Hughson and his partners founded the Holle Automobile Manufacturers Company, with Hughson as president. Their auto showroom was located at 1814 Market Street and sold Ford, Duryea, and Acme cars. 1903 was also the year that Ford Motor Company was founded. According to stories told by Hughson later in life, he traveled to Detroit that year to purchase bicycles, met Henry Ford, and with his partners invested $5,000 in the purchase of some of the first Ford autos.

The Holle showroom on Market Street was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire. Afterward Hughson and his partners re-incorporated as the Standard Motor Car Company and moved into wood-framed showrooms on Golden Gate Avenue (no longer standing). During 1909-1913 Hughson's Standard Motor Company was located in a substantial new brick building at the southeast corner of Golden Gate and Van Ness avenues (extant; now numbered 550 Van Ness). Here, they sold Stoddard-Dayton, Ford, Velie, and Baker Electric autos and Federal trucks.

In 1913 Hughson and his partners re-incorporated again, this time for the purpose of attracting a Kissel Kar franchise. They formed the Pacific Kissel Kar Branch and moved their showroom into a block-long

(Continued next page.)

History – Occupants (continued)

building at the northwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Geary Street (no longer standing). For the next five years Kissel Kar was their major brand, but they also sold Ford and Federal trucks. They also had a Los Angeles location where they sold Baker Electrics in addition to the above brands.

In 1918 Hughson and his partners reorganized yet again, as the William L. Hughson Company, apparently to emphasize their line of Ford autos over the Kissel Kar line, which they dropped in early 1919. Two years later, in 1921, Hughson moved into his largest building yet, at the southeast corner of Eleventh and Market streets (no longer standing). Hughson remained here through 1943, selling Ford autos and trucks, Fordson tractors, Lincoln and Mercury autos, and Federal trucks.

Late in his life, in 1943-1945, Hughson moved for the last time, to two buildings that he used in tandem and where he remained until his death in 1967, at age 97. These were 1270 Bush/1200 Larkin (extant) and 1400 Van Ness. He moved to the former in 1943, and for two years it was his showroom and service shop. He began to occupy 1400 Van Ness in 1945, and that building then became his showroom, while 1270 Bush remained his service shop and main office.

He also occupied other buildings during the 1940s-1960s in addition to the above two. These included 1361 Bush (an auto painting shop; 1945-1950; extant but altered), 2020-2034 Van Ness (a used car salesroom and then an auto painting shop; 1951-1959; extant), 1415 Van ness (used auto sales; 1957-1964; extant), 1350 Van Ness (used auto sales; extant), and 1267 Bush (auto repair, beginning 1961; extant).

After Hughson's death in 1967 his Ford showroom continued to be located in at 1400 Van Ness through at least 1969. Later, in the 1970s and 1980s, this building was a Datsun showroom.

In sum, this building had 36 years of known use as a showroom for new autos (through 1964, the end year of the period being studied). Counting used car sales, this building had about forty years of auto-related use (through 1964).

History – Context

For purpose of comparison, other buildings that share themes similar to those of 1400 Van Ness are listed below:

<u>Surviving early auto showrooms</u>

The oldest auto showrooms in the study area (i.e. those built through 1913) are listed below, in order of construction date. These are probably the oldest auto sales buildings in San Francisco as well as in the study area.

> 550 Van Ness. Built 1908-1909. A moderately sized showroom. The brick walls and ornament remain intact while the window sash has been altered.

(Continued next page.)

History – Context (continued)

2000 Van Ness. Built 1909-1910. This building has lost integrity due to alterations and major additions of 1927.

690 Van Ness. Built 1910. A small showroom with only a few years of use as a new auto showroom; its integrity is fair at best.

1301-1305 Van Ness. Built 1911-1912. This large building has good integrity, but during its first five years its main use was as a tire dealership; its auto showroom use was secondary. Later in the 1910s the entire building became devoted to use as an auto showroom.

1525 Van Ness. Built 1912. This moderately-sized building has only fair integrity.

1430-1480 Van Ness. Built 1912. This building had early, but brief, use as an auto showroom. Window openings have been altered.

1001 Polk Street. Built 1912-1913. A large showroom. Its window sash has been removed, but the integrity of this building is otherwise high.

1400 Van Ness. Built 1912-1913. A large showroom with high integrity. The building being evaluated here.

1414-1420 Van Ness. Built 1912-1913. During this building's first decade one of its two storefronts was used as a showroom, and the other was a tires shop. Integrity is good.

1350 Van Ness. Built in 1912-1913. The cornice of this small showroom has been removed.

1595 Van Ness. Built in 1913. A large showroom. Windows have been altered, but integrity is otherwise good.

1600 Van Ness. Built in 1913. Large grilles cover the windows, diminishing the integrity.

2050 Van Ness. Built in 1913. A moderately-sized showroom with fifteen years of such use, including a few years of electric auto sales.

1062 Geary. Built in 1913. This small building had only brief use as an auto showroom, and has fair integrity.

The best of these, in terms of integrity, longevity of use as an auto showroom, and size or capacity are 1400 Van Ness, 1001 Polk, and 1595 Van Ness, and 1301-1305 Van Ness. Each of these four also served as showrooms for major brands.

Packard showrooms

For purposes of comparison, all of the Packard showrooms in San Francisco are listed below:

(Continued next page.)

History – Context (continued)

1903-1906: Pacific Motor Car Co. sells Packards at 49-53 City Hall Avenue (destroyed in 1906)
1907-1910: Culyer Lee sells Packards at 453 Golden Gate (demolished)
1910-1917: Cuyler Lee sells Packards at 2000 Van Ness (altered and greatly added to in 1927)
1917-1922: Earle C. Anthony sells Packards at 1400 Van Ness (extant)
1923-1927: Anthony sells Packards at 1335-1395 Van Ness (greatly altered)
1927-1959: Anthony sells Packards at 901 Van Ness (extant; lightly altered)
1938-1941: Laurent and Niello sell Packards at 1730-1750 Van Ness (mostly altered)

In sum, 1400 Van Ness is one of two surviving buildings with high integrity where Packard was sold in San Francisco. It was the earlier showroom by a decade, whereas the other building, 901 Van Ness, is larger and was a Packard showroom for a much longer period.

Reo showrooms

During its 32-year existence (1904-1936) the popular Reo auto was sold in eight successive showrooms in San Francisco. Only two of these showrooms still stand with high integrity. They are 1400 Van Ness, where Reo was sold by Anthony during 1915-1921; and 1001 Polk, where Reo was sold in its declining years (1931-1936).

Chevrolet showrooms

Chevrolet was sold here by Robert A. Smith for five years, during 1927-1931. Chevrolet was also sold at an early date at 1600 Van Ness (in 1916, 1920-1921, and 1932-1933), but that building has only fair integrity. 1414-1420 Van Ness also held a Chevrolet showroom very briefly (1918). The most important Chevrolet showrooms are 550 Van Ness (1936-1954) and 999 Van Ness (1937-1960s), especially the latter.

Ford showrooms

Four buildings still stand that have held showrooms for this important auto brand. They are:

550 Van Ness. Occupied 1909-1913 by William L. Hughson's Standard Auto Company. He sold Ford and other brands here.

1270 Bush/1200 Larkin. This was occupied by William L. Hughson's Ford business from 1943 to his death in 1967. Its main use was as his service shop and office, but he did sell Ford autos from here in 1943-1945.

1400 Van Ness. This was Hughson's Ford showroom from 1945 through his death in 1967, and continued to serve his company for at least two years after his death.

950 Van Ness. This building held Cecil Whitebone's Ford dealership, known as Midtown Motors, from 1940 into the 1970s. It was the only major Ford dealership in the study area other than Hughson's. All of its window and door sash have been altered.

(Continued next page.)

History – Context (continued)

The two most important of these are 550 Van Ness, for the early date that it held a Ford showroom; and 1400 Van Ness, for its high integrity and its longevity of this use. Both are also of interest for their association with Hughson.

Integrity

This building has been little changed since its construction. It retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.

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*.

Criterion 1

Completed in 1913, this is an early example of an automobile showroom. With 36 years of such use in its history, it has excellent longevity in this use. In addition, this is one of the earliest auto showrooms with high integrity standing in San Francisco; it could be considered the best early example. It is the second most important Packard showroom in San Francisco, and it held this brand at an early date. It is the better example of two Reo showrooms left standing with high integrity in San Francisco. It should probably be considered as the third best example of a Chevrolet showroom in San Francisco, for although it is the earliest of the three, its use as a Chevrolet showroom was brief. It is one of the two best examples of a Ford showroom in San Francisco. Finally, this building served as an auto showroom for many early brands – Chalmers, Dort, Durant, Grant, Hupmobile, Pope-Hartford, and Saxon – of which the first five listed were once popular, but are now little-remembered.

For these collective 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 an automobile showroom. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1913-1932 and 1945-1964, the years the building had this use (considered through 1964, the end year of the period being studied).

(Continued next page.)

Evaluation (continued)

Criterion 2

Three proprietors of auto showrooms in this building were individually important in this field. Robert A. Smith's use of this building was perhaps too brief for this building to be considered as historically significant solely for his presence. Earle C. Anthony was here at an early date, but on balance his showroom at 901 Van Ness represents his history better than this building does. 1400 Van Ness is, however, one of three buildings in San Francisco that are needed to represent the career of William L. Hughson, a very important Ford dealer. The building at 550 Van Ness represents his early career, the building at 1270 Bush/1200 Larkin served as his office and main service shop during the 1940s-1960s, and 1400 Van Ness was his main showroom during the 1940s-1960s. Accordingly, this building appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2, at the local level, for its association with Hughson. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1945-1964, the years Hughson's showroom was here (though 1964).

Criterion 3

Architecturally, this building is a splendid example of the Classical Revival style as applied to an auto showroom, designed by Herman Barth, an important San Francisco architect. Its composition and proportions convey a feeling of monumentality, and the details of the cornice and pilasters are at a high level of excellence. Architecturally, only a few other showrooms in the study area are in its class. Accordingly, this building appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3, for its design. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1912-1913, the year of construction.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building are its height and width along both facades; the stucco covering of the building; the pattern of muntins and lights in the windows above the first story; the shapes of the window and entrance openings in the first story; all of the ornamental details and moldings, including those in the cornice, frieze, and pilasters; the rusticated base; the paneled spandrels; and the grille along the base of the Bush Street façade.

References (continued from page 5)

San Francisco Chronicle articles:
"Consolidated Is to Handle King Cars." Nov. 22, 1913, p. 8. Mentions Pope-Hartford is in receivership.
Leon J. Pinkson, "Chapman Takes the Pope-Hartford Building." January 17, 1914, p. 11.
February 15, 1914, p. 46. Earle C. Anthony will now sell Chalmers cars throughout California.
"New Methods in Chalmers Agency." February 22, 1914, p. 42.
Leon J. Pinkson, "Earle Anthony Is Named Grant Distributor." January 29, 1915, p. 13.
"Selection of New Dealer Is Surprise." June 3, 1917, p. 45. Anthony is named Packard distributor.
"Reo Branches to Be Extended." July 31, 1921, p. A-3 and A-5. Reo opens its own factory branches.
Plus display ads for the dealerships in this building, 1913-1921, found through ProQuest website index.

Photo of 1400 Van Ness Avenue, from the Department of City Planning's Van Ness Avenue Plan files, early 1980s.