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

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code 6Z
Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 1730-1750 Van Ness Avenue

P1. Historic name of building (if any): _____
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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 1730-1750 Van Ness Avenue City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 622, lot 19

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

This one-story concrete building fills its lot, which measures 63'-10" along Van Ness Avenue and has a depth of 123 feet. In composition, the façade is divided by rusticated piers into three bays of unequal width. The widest of the three bays is at right (to the south); it contains a storefront occupying over half of the entire façade. Another storefront is at left, and a narrow entrance falls between the two. The south storefront has a non-original metal frame or sash, while the north storefront may have partially-original framing. The entrance has a wooden door with full-length glazing; it may be original or early, but the large transom area above has been filled in. A thin, profiled cornice and course of dentils stretch across the top of the building. Below them, filling the space above the storefront windows, is a non-original screen or awning.

Presumably this building, which originally held auto showrooms, once had a vehicle entrance through the façade, but no such entrance currently exists.

*P3b Resource Attributes: HP6 – one-story commercial building

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

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

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1919-1920; pub. building notice

*P7. Owner and Address:
AMERICAN BUDDHIST CULTUR
1750 VAN NESS AVENUE
San Francisco CA 94109

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

*P9. Date Recorded: December 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** 6Z

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 1730-1750 Van Ness Avenue

B1. Historic Name: _____

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: auto showroom B4. Present Use: Buddhist temple and bookstore

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

***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Built in 1919-1920. Windows altered and awning-screen added at unknown dates.

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

***B8. Related Features:**
none

B9a. Architect: Edward E. Young b. Builder: day work

***B10. Significance: Theme** automobile industry **Area** San Francisco
Period of Significance n/a **Property Type** auto showroom **Applicable Criteria** n/a
(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 as an investment for the Julius Levin Company, a brokerage firm, to designs by architect Edward E. Young. The occupants for the first six years were automobile dealers. During 1920-1921 three dealers occupied this building simultaneously, while after that date the building held a single auto showroom. Other types of businesses were here after 1926, except for four years during 1938-1941, when an auto showroom occupied the building once again. The auto dealerships were:

1920-1921: Anderson-Smith Motor Co. occupied the storefront at 1730 Van Ness. This newly-organized and important firm sold Chevrolet and Scripps-Booth autos here (briefly) and at its main branch, at 377-399 Golden Gate. After 1921 Anderson-Smith (and later, Robert A. Smith) continued to sell Chevrolet autos at 399 Golden Gate and at many other locations, one of which, 1400 Van Ness (occupied by Smith 1927-1931), still stands.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 3.)

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

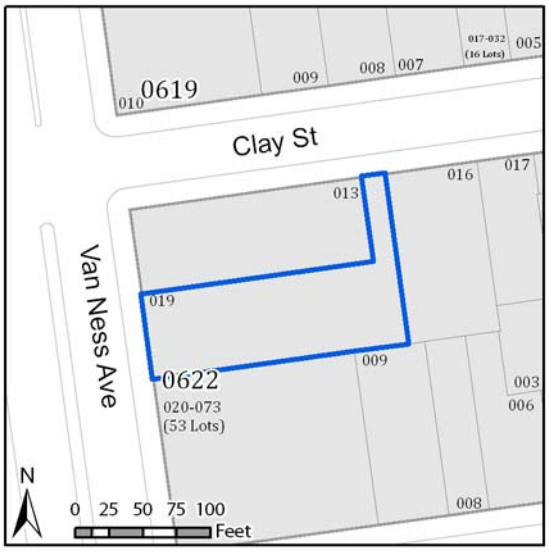
***B12. References:**
Building and Engineering News, Nov. 19, 1919, 16:3
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1921-1953
1929 Sanborn insurance map: two stores here, #s 1730 and 1740
1948 Sanborn insurance map: bakery here

B13. Remarks:

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

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)



History (continued)

1920-1921: Berthold L. Levin, auto sales, 1740 Van Ness. This man may have been related to the building owner. The brand of auto he sold here is unknown.

1920-1921: Wright Motor Co., which sold Columbia Six autos, shared the storefront at 1740 Van Ness with B. L. Levin.

1923-1924: Durant Motor Co., distributor of Durant and Flint automobiles. This company's showroom moved around during the 1920s. Earlier, and later, it occupied much larger showrooms at 1400 Van Ness (in 1922), 1625 Van Ness (in 1925-1926), and 1535-1599 Market (1929). Both 1400 and 1625 Van Ness still stand with good integrity.

1926: Elcar Sales Co., distributor of Elcar autos, a minor brand.

1938-1941: Laurent and Niello, dealers in Packard autos. This firm was a minor dealer in Packards. The city's major Packard dealer was Earle C. Anthony, who sold this brand in much larger showrooms at 1400 Van Ness (1916-1922; extant), 1395 Van Ness (1922-1927; altered), and 901 Van Ness (1927-1961; extant).

Other uses held by this building include:

1927: The Servel Corporation, dealer in electric refrigerators.

1933: Reliance Acceptance Corp., an auto finance firm, at #1730; and Boardman and Flowers Pleasure Boats, at #1740.

1946: Greenline Bakeries

1953: Security Finance Corp.

Integrity

The cornice and rusticated piers are original, while the balance of the building is mostly altered. An important consideration is that the early location of vehicle entrances is no longer clear due to alteration for storefronts. Overall, the building retains integrity of location and setting, while integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association are mostly lost.

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

(Continued next page.)

Evaluation (continued)

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*.

The automobile dealerships in this building were here only briefly. The two most important brands sold here, Chevrolet and Packard, are much better represented for this period by other, much larger auto showrooms that still stand with good integrity: at 1400 Van Ness, for Chevrolet; and at 901 Van Ness, for Packard. Similarly, the Durant auto brand is much better represented by showrooms at 1400 Van Ness and 1625 Van Ness.

For these reasons, and because of the building's poor integrity, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under criteria 1 or 2. Under Criterion 3, this building is modest, with minimal detailing and poor integrity, and thus does not appear to be eligible for its design.