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) 700-710 Van Ness Avenue/678 Turk St.

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Gallagher-Marsh Business College/Bank Chevrolet/Walt Baptiste studio
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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 700-710 Van Ness Avenue/678 Turk Street City San Francisco Zip 94102
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 742, lot 15

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

This two-story commercial building fills its 60-foot by 96-foot lot at the northeast corner of Van Ness Avenue and Turk Street. According to the building permit the structure of the building is primarily brick, with first story exterior columns of cast iron, interior columns of wood, a first floor of concrete, a second story floor of wood, and cornices of artificial stone. The surface of the building is faced in stucco, which is lightly scored to resemble masonry. Each façade is finished with a cornice, a range of windows in the second story, and an arcaded first story.

At the top of the building is a profiled cornice supported by scroll-and-acanthus leaf modillions. Below this is a blank frieze defined along its top and bottom edges by profiled moldings. This entablature is visually supported by compound pilasters at the three corners of the facades. The facing planes of these pilasters are paneled, while, in the second story, the receding plane has fluting (see detail photo). The capitals of the pilasters are profiled with moldings that wrap around the compounded corners.

(See Continuation Sheet, p. 2.)

*P3b Resource Attributes: HP6 – commercial building; HP15 – educational building

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

P5b. Description of Photo:
(View, date, accession #)
Looking east at Van Ness façade. June 2009

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1915; building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
DAGOVITZ MELVIN & ANGELA
714 VAN NESS AVE
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94102

*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)

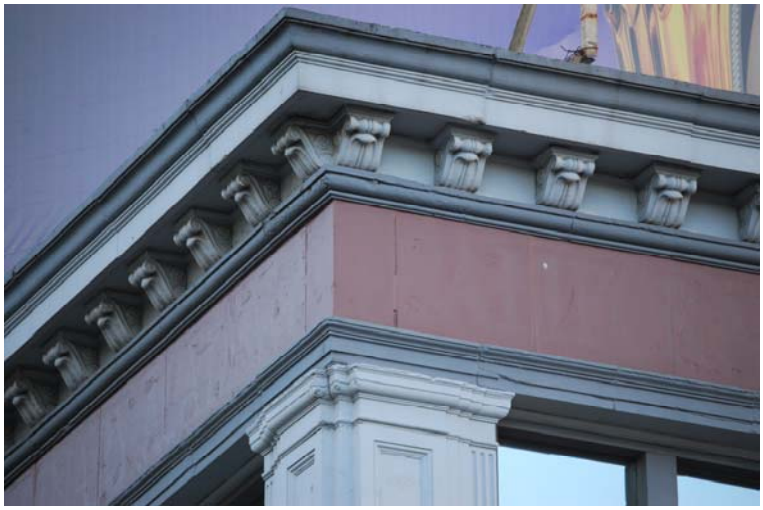
Description (continued):

A range of paired, rectangular windows stretches across each façade in the second story. Window pairs are separated by pilasters, and a narrow vertical bar divides each window into a pair. Immediately below, the spandrel between the stories takes the form of a blank frieze which, like the one beneath the cornice, is defined at the top and bottom by profiled courses.

Arcaded windows stretch across the first story of each façade. The transom area of each window is wooden, and divided into smaller lights by vertical mullions and muntins. Circular medallions are found in the spandrel between each arch. Below the arched transoms and transom bars are rectangular storefront windows separated by fluted pilasters with unarticulated, blocky capitals. These storefront windows are set in modern metal frames. Aside from these frames, six of the first story bays retain their original design, while two (facing Van Ness Avenue) have been opened up for new entrances, and three (facing Turk Street) have been filled in with new windows. Two of the latter bays were originally vehicle entrances.

At far right in the Turk St. façade is an original arched entrance leading to the second story. This entry has a floral keystone, paneled sides in the recess, and paired wooden doors with full-length glazing.

Perspective view. The window treatment is identical to that in the historic photo shown on page 8.



Detail photos. Top: cornice. Middle: arched wooden transom. Bottom: compounded pilaster.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 3CS

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 700-710 Van Ness Avenue/678 Turk Street

B1. Historic Name: Gallagher-Marsh Business College/Bank Chevrolet/Walt Baptiste studio

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: auto showroom and business college

B4. Present Use: largely vacant

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

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

Built in 1915. Five of the eleven first story storefront bays have been generally altered.

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

***B8. Related Features:**

none

B9a. Architect: William Knowles

b. Builder: unknown

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

Period of Significance 1915-1964 (passim) **Property Type** auto sales, offices **Applicable Criteria** 1, 2, 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 1915 for the William Ede Co. as an investment, to designs by architect William Knowles. Knowles worked in San Francisco from 1897-1926 and afterward in Oakland to the 1940s. He is known primarily for his Shingle style and other fine residences, and he also designed some large institutional buildings, e.g. the Athens Athletic Club in Oakland (ca. 1925).

The first floor of this building was occupied by a long series of mostly short-lived auto-related businesses from 1917 to at least 1964. These included new auto sales (1917 and 1930), used auto sales (1919-1921, 1926-1928, 1931-1960, 1964), tire sales (1918-1919), and general auto supplies (1922). The only one of these businesses to remain in this building for more than four years was Bank Chevrolet, which sold used cars and occupied the ground floor for 22 years (1938-1960).

(See Continuation Sheet, page 5.)

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

***B12. References:**

Building permit (September 2, 1915)

The Architect, March 1916, p. 140 (photo)

Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1917-1964, and for Walter Baptiste, 1940-1962.

Richard Rosen, "Walt Baptiste," Yoga Journal website.

1929 Sanborn insurance map (auto sales at #700-708, store at #710, business college in second story)

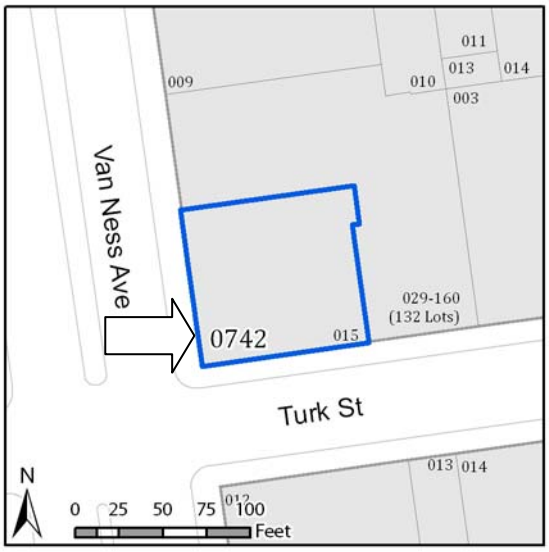
B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** William Kostura

Date of Evaluation: November 2009

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)



History (continued)

A list of first floor occupants through 1964 is as follows:

1917: Richardson Automobiles (sold new King-Eight autos)
1918: Pacific Pipe and Supply (tires)
1919: Haldeman Tire Co.
1919-1921: Universal Motors (used autos)
1922: California Auto Supply Co. (auto supplies including tires)
1922-1923: Golden Gate Autos (either new or used autos)
1926-1927: Perrine, McGurron and Harts (used autos)
1928: Standard Autos (used)
1930: Johnson-Blalack, Inc. (new Auburn, Cord, and Duesenberg autos)
1931: W. N. Noble (used autos)
1932: O. J. Masters (used autos)
1933-1936: E. I. Klein (used autos)
1938-1960: Bank Chevrolet (used autos)
1964: Cecil Whitebone, Inc. (used autos)

As can be seen from the above, used car sales predominated in the ground floor of this building, with at least 36 years of such use between 1919 and 1964.

Of the many buildings that have stood in the study area and that were devoted primarily to used car sales for a substantial number of years, this is one of seven good examples that remain. The others include:

850 Van Ness Avenue (41 years of such use during 1919-1964)
1415 Van Ness Avenue (34 years of such use during 1923-1964)
824 Ellis Street (27 years during 1938-1964)
714 Van Ness Avenue (24+ years during 1920-1960)
1545-1549 Pine Street (about 20 years of such use during 1938-1964)
1350 Van Ness Avenue (about 20 years during 1944-1964)

Of the above, only one building, 850 Van Ness, had a longer, or as early, history of use as a used car salesroom, compared to 700-710 Van Ness. Of the above, only two buildings, 824 Ellis and 1545-1549 Pine, retain as high a degree of integrity as 700-710 Van Ness. To summarize, in terms of early date of this use, longevity of this use, and integrity, 700-710 Van Ness is, by a fairly wide margin, the best example of a used car salesroom in the study area.

The second floor of this building, entered through 678 Turk, was always occupied by non-auto-related businesses. The first was the Gallagher-Marsh Business College, which remained here for 20 years, from 1915-1935. The proprietor was Robert F. Gallagher and he taught stenography, bookkeeping and typing here. This was one of several business colleges in San Francisco during these years. By far the most important, and the one with the greatest longevity, was Heald's Business College, none of whose buildings of the 1890s-1970s remain standing. Others (during the 1920s) included La Salle, which taught accounting, salesmanship, law, and business administration from several sites; Merken's, which

(Continued next page.)

History (continued)

taught bookkeeping, accounting, commercial law, typing, and shorthand from the Phelan Building; and a number of secretarial schools. Gallagher-Marsh was one of the longest-lasting of these colleges, but its programme was less extensive than some others'. After 1935 it moved to 995 Market Street, where it remained well into the 1940s.

From 1952-1962 the second floor was occupied by the studio of Walter Baptiste (1917-2001), San Francisco's earliest-known and longest-lasting yoga teacher. According to Richard Rosen, who wrote an obituary of Baptiste in *Yoga Journal*, Baptiste learned of yoga from his uncle, who was a disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda, a nationally-known meditation teacher from the Hindu tradition whose books are still widely available. Walt Baptiste began teaching breathwork at age 17 and soon afterward began teaching weight training in combination with yoga and meditation. His studios were listed in San Francisco city directories beginning in 1940. He moved his studio frequently during the 1940s and early 1950s, from 358 Sutter, to 315 Sutter, 567 Sutter, 48 Golden Gate, and back to 315 Sutter. 678 Turk was the first studio he remained at for more than four years; his name for it was variously Moderne Physical Culture Studio and then the Academy of Integral Arts. He later moved his studio to an upper floor at 419 Sutter (1963-1970) and then to the southwest corner of Clement and Arguello (1973-1990s).

One other yoga studio in San Francisco was well-known before the 1980s. That was Swami Satchinananda's Integral Yoga Institute, in a Victorian house at 770 Dolores Street, from 1972-present.

Integrity

The main alteration has been to five of the eleven first story openings; the rest of the exterior of this building remains essentially intact as built. In sum, this building 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*.

(Continued on next page.)

Evaluation (continued)

This building's most important auto-related use was as a showroom for used cars, for 36 years between 1919-1964. As auto-related businesses go, used car sales is less important in the history of the study area than new car sales or public garages, and should also be considered less important than some of the larger and longer-lasting auto repair shops or auto supply houses. Nevertheless, used car businesses were quite numerous in the study area during the 1920s-1960s, and the best examples of buildings that housed such businesses represent a major theme of the Van Ness auto row history. As noted above, in terms of early date of this use, longevity of this use, and integrity, 700-710 Van Ness is clearly the best example of a used car salesroom in the study area. For this reason, this 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 and theme is 1919-1921, 1926-1928, and 1931-1964, the years the building had this use.

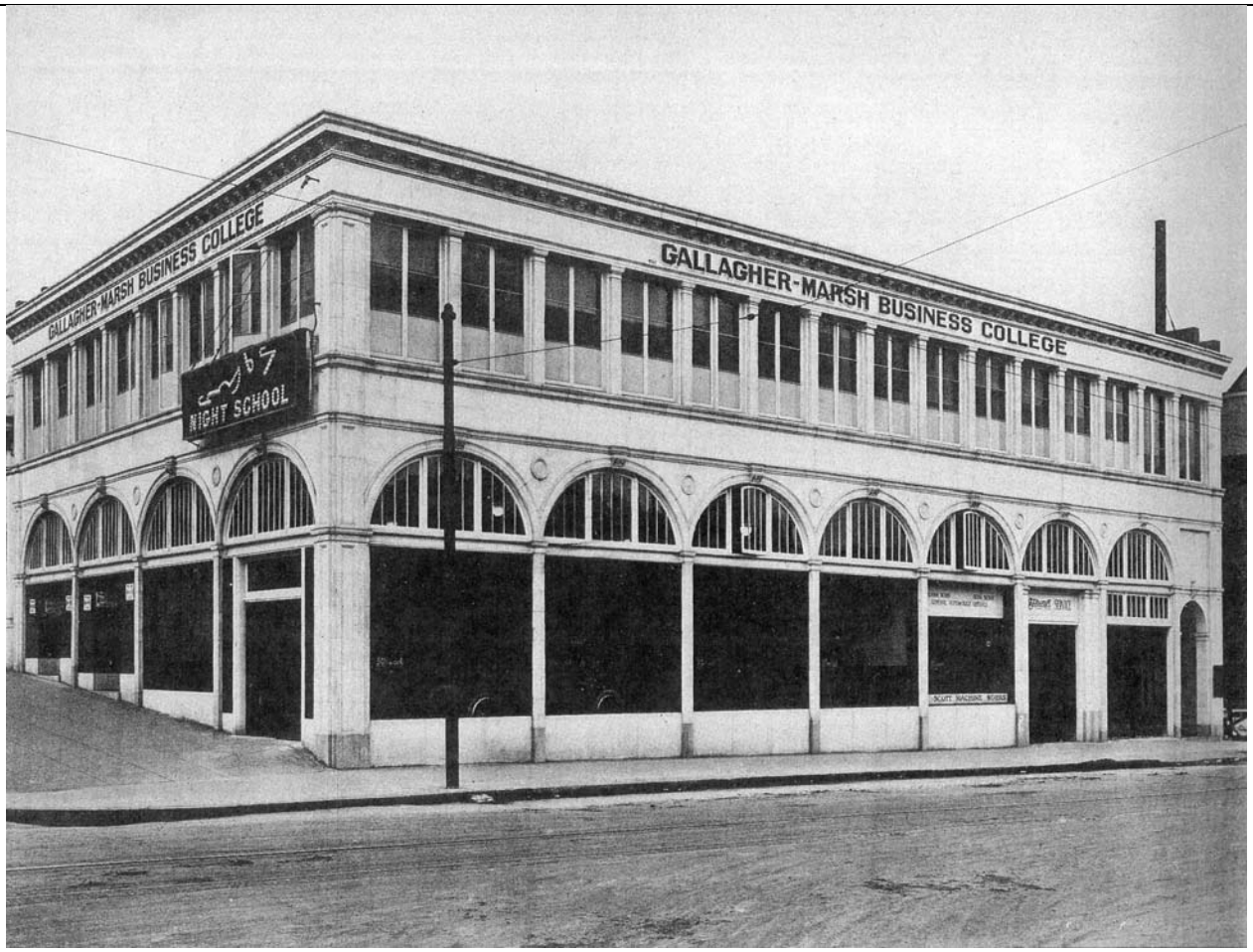
This building also has significance as one of the first yoga studios in San Francisco, and perhaps the first to remain in one building for more than a few years. This is a little-researched area, but there is no doubt that Baptiste was a pioneer in teaching yoga to westerners in this country, and that this was his first long-lasting studio. Given yoga's great popularity, and the seeming certainty that this popularity will last, the first important teacher of this practice in San Francisco should be considered to have significance. Accordingly, this building appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1, as an early yoga studio, and under Criterion 2, for its association with Walt Baptiste. The Period of Significance under each of these criteria is 1952-1962, the years his studio was here.

More contextual research on San Francisco's pre-World War II business colleges should be done before evaluating this building for its twenty-year history of this use.

Architecturally, this building is notable for its arcaded facades and its ranks of paired second story windows. The detailing of this building is not quite as good as that of some auto showrooms of similar class and age, but the composition is fine, and the best features, the long ranges of arcaded window transoms and second story windows along both facades, remain intact. Thus, this building appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3, for its design. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1915, the year of construction.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building are its height and width, the lightly scored stucco surface, the cornice with modillions, the frieze with its moldings, the paired second story windows with intervening pilasters, the spandrel between the two stories and its moldings, the arcaded transom with its wooden mullions and muntins, the spandrels with medallions between the arches of the transom, the pilasters at the corners and in the first story, the size and shape of the first story windows, and the entrance at 678 Turk, with its arch, ornament, paneled sides, and wooden doors.



Top: Historic photo of the building, from *The Architect*, March 1916

Bottom: Entrance to the second floor at 678 Turk Street.