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) 1900 Van Ness Avenue

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Stutz, Peerless, and Franklin auto showroom
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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 1900 Van Ness Avenue City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 598, lot 9

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

This three-story, stucco-clad building fills its 47'-8" by 123' lot at the northeast corner of Van Ness Avenue and Washington Street. According to a published building notice, the structure is brick with reinforcing steel. In composition, the façade is divided into three bays of equal width along Van Ness and seven bays, also of equal width, along Washington. Nearly all of the original ornament has been removed. What remains consists of diamond patterns within panels that are impressed into the piers that define the bays. In the parapet, panels can be found where balustrades of clathri screens once were. All windows have replacement metal frames or sash; however, those in the upper two stories are divided in a pattern identical to that of the original wooden windows in those stories. Four mezzanine windows, all with new sash, survive in the Washington Street façade, while six others have been filled in.

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

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

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

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1919; published building notices

*P7. Owner and Address:
1900-1902 VAN NESS LLC
1902 VAN NESS AVE 3RD FLR
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)

Photo of 1900 Van Ness ca. 1940s. At the San Francisco History Room, SFPL. Assessor's negatives, block 599, #35.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 6Z

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 1900 Van Ness Avenue

B1. Historic Name: Stutz, Peerless, and Franklin auto showroom

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: auto showroom B4. Present Use: retail store and offices

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

***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Built in 1919. Cornice and other ornament removed, parapet balustrade filled in, and window sash altered at an unknown date (1950s or later).

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

***B8. Related Features:**
none

B9a. Architects: Rousseau and Rousseau b. Builder: unknown

***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 in 1919 as an investment for the Gerard Investment Company, to designs by Rousseau and Rousseau, architects. Automobile showrooms occupied this building for its first thirteen years, and non-auto-related businesses were here afterward. The auto dealerships were:

1919-1921: Latham, Davis and Co., Stutz autos. This popular brand of expensive, powerful autos was sold in San Francisco from its inception in 1911 through at least 1933, in eight different buildings, remaining at none for more than a few years. Most of these have been heavily altered or demolished. The best surviving examples of Stutz showrooms in San Francisco are 1350 Van Ness (where Stutz was sold during 1913-1914) and 1595 Van Ness (during 1926-1928).

(See Continuation Sheet, page 4.)

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

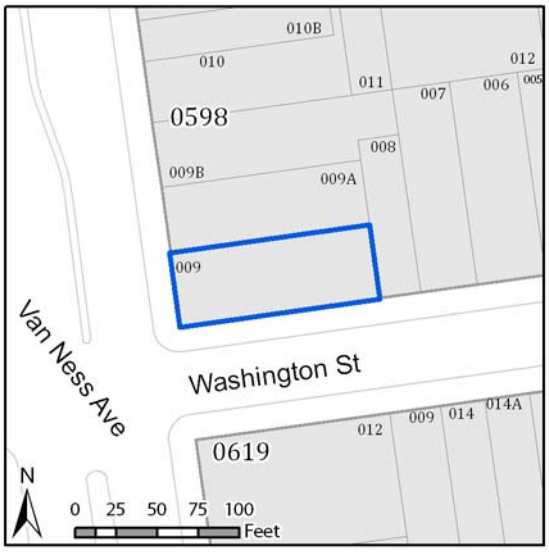
***B12. References:**
Building and Engineering News, March 19, 1919, 8:2
"Three-Story Auto Showroom…," SF *Chronicle*, May 31, 1919, p. 9.
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 19-1964
1929 Sanborn insurance map (auto sales & service; repairs, 3rd sty)
1948 Sanborn insurance map (store, rug cleaning on 2nd-3rd stories)

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)

1922-1925: The Pioneer Motor Company sold Peerless autos here during 1922-1923. When this firm failed, the Peerless Motor Co. of Cleveland, Ohio continued to sell its autos here through 1925, occupying 1900 Van Ness as its San Francisco branch. Peerless was a popular, expensive brand aimed at a wealthy market. Eight San Francisco showrooms offered this brand between 1903 and 1929. All of them have either been heavily altered or demolished except for one, 1301-1305 Van Ness, where Peerless was sold for only one year (1929).

1926: Flint Motor Company. This minor brand was sold at one other San Francisco showroom, 1730-1750 Van Ness Avenue (also altered).

1927-1930: Franklin autos were sold here for these four years by a succession of firms: the Boyer-Tennant Motor Co. (1927), the Franklin-Tennant Motor Co. (1928), and the Franklin-Pacific Motor Company. This reasonably long-lasting brand of automobile was also sold at three other auto showrooms in San Francisco during 1907-1924, all of which have been demolished.

1931: Stutz of Northern California. This was the second (very brief) occasion when Stutz was sold here.

1932: Lloyd Veitch, autos sales. The brand he sold here is unknown.

In sum, three auto brands that were once well-known -- Stutz, Peerless, and Franklin – were among the automobiles sold here over thirteen years.

After 1932 this building was occupied by a manufacturers' agent (1933), the North End Athletic Club (also in 1933), and the Turko-Persian Rug Co. (1930s-1950s).

Integrity

This building has suffered the loss of its cornice, the filling in of the parapet balusters, removal of most ornament, and alteration of all window sash. It retains integrity of location and has lost integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Integrity of setting is diminished through the alteration of nearby buildings.

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.*

History (continued)

Due to its loss of integrity, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under criteria 1 or 2.

Architecturally, this building was once handsome, but due to loss of integrity (e.g. removal of the cornice and other ornament, and alteration of window sash) it does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3.

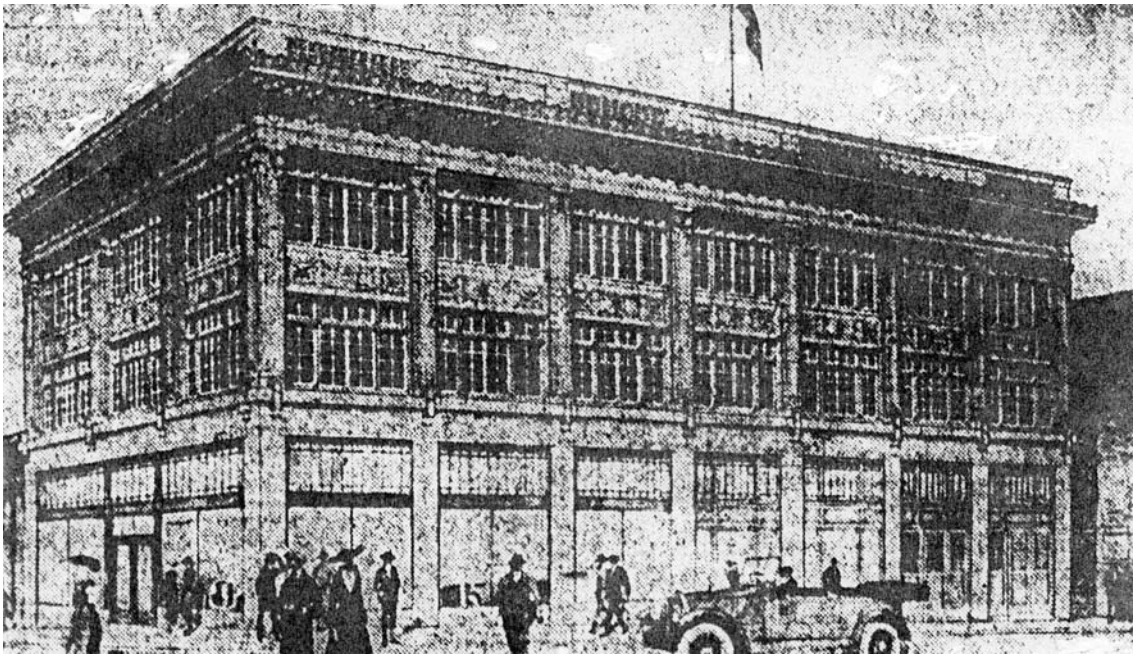


Illustration of 1900 Van Ness Avenue, from the San Francisco *Chronicle*, May 31, 1919, p. 9.