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) 1233-1237 Van Ness Avenue

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Tansey-Crowe and Federal Rubber tire shops
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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 1233-1237 Van Ness Avenue City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 690, lot 1A

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

This two-story building at the northwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Daniel Burnham Court fills its 60' (along Van Ness) by 109'-9" lot. The available sources indicate that this building has load-bearing brick walls, with a steel frame just inside the walls and wooden interior posts. The façade is covered with stucco that has been lightly scored.

This building is the near twin to the building next door to the north, which has the address 1243-1245 Van Ness/1305-1311 Sutter. The two buildings were built at the same time for the same owner, to designs by the same architect. They share cornice lines and have the same fenestration, but vary in their details. The more southerly of the two buildings has an extensive automobile-related history and the other one does not, so the former (#1233-1235 Van Ness) is being evaluated on this form separately from the latter.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 2.)

*P3b Resource Attributes: HP8 – industrial building; HP6 – two-story commercial building;

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

P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)
View looking west
December 2009

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1913-1914; building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
KENNETH C&EVA S SO REVOC
43 CLOUD VIEW RD
SAUSALITO CA 94565

*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 composition, the facades of this building are divided by piers into three bays along Van Ness and six bays along Daniel Burnham. The highest level of finish is in the Van Ness façade and in the two adjacent bays on Daniel Burnham; the other four bays on Daniel Burnham have simpler detailing.

The main cornice wraps around both facades. On the Van Ness side, and in the first two bays along Daniel Burnham, the cornice is simply decorated with shields and is supported by corbelled brackets, with two levels of acanthus leaves. A rope molding runs along the bottom of this cornice and bracket assembly. On the balance of the Daniel Burnham side the cornice lacks the shield ornament and is supported by much simpler brackets. A secondary cornice can be found at the second floor level (again, facing Van Ness and along the first two bays of the side street). This cornice is faced with a Greek key pattern and has a course of egg-and-dart molding immediately beneath it.

In both facades, all of the second story windows are wooden, and are divided by mullions into three parts. In the Van Ness façade and the two adjacent bays along Daniel Burnham, these windows are further divided by transom bars. In the other four bays along Daniel Burnham the windows are filled with two-over-two double-hung sash.

In the first story facing Van Ness, all windows and doors have replacement metal frames or sash. Windows in the Daniel Burnham side have replacement sash within original frames. A former vehicle entrance in the westernmost bay of this façade has become a pedestrian entrance.

To summarize, this building is essentially intact except for first story window and door frames and sash.

Detail of the main cornice, with corbelled acanthus leaf brackets

Top photo: A second story window, with main and secondary cornices. This window is in the eastern-most bay of the Daniel Burnham side. The treatment in the Van Ness Avenue side is the same as this.

Bottom photo: A second story window in one of the four western bays of the Daniel Burnham side of the building. Note the plainer treatment compared to the window and cornices above.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 3CS

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 1233-1237 Van Ness Avenue

B1. Historic Name: Tansey-Crowe and Federal Rubber tire shops

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: auto tire shops B4. Present Use: restaurant and chiropractic office

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

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

Built in 1913-1914. Storefront window and door openings altered at an unknown date.

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

***B8. Related Features:**

none

B9a. Architect: David C. Coleman b. Builder: Moses Fisher

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

Period of Significance 1913-1935 **Property Type** tire shops, offices **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 1913-1914 by the builder Moses Fisher as one of his many real estate investments. For his buildings, Fisher frequently employed the architect of this building, David C. Coleman, who practiced intermittently in San Francisco during the 1890s, and continuously from 1905-1929. Coleman's practice was diversified, consisting of houses, apartments, and commercial buildings. Among his finer works, all built during 1910-1914, are the Mizpah Apartments at 1105 Bush (1910), the two sets of shingled flats at the northeast corner of Ninth Avenue and Anza (1911), a house for Fisher at 725 Euclid (1913-1914), the Devonshire Apartments at 1086 Bush (1914), and the William Murdock, Jr. house at 266 Pacheco (1914), said to be the first house in Forest Hill.

A near twin to this building is next door at 1243-1245 Van Ness Avenue. It was built at the same time as this building and was also designed by Coleman for Fisher. It was divided into eight stores and shops, plus offices above; it had little auto-related use in its history.

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

***B12. References:**

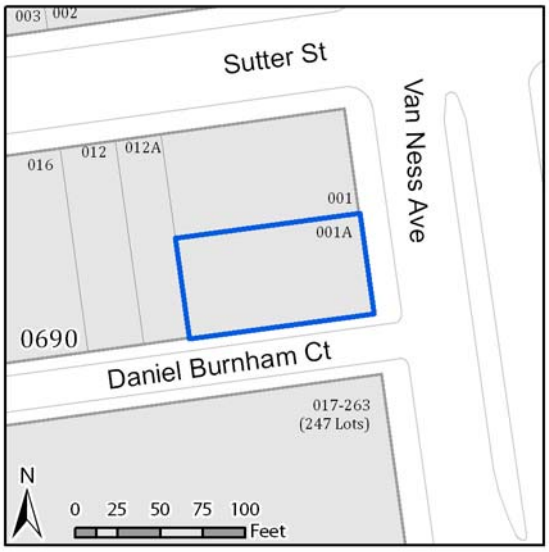
Building permit #52306 (November 14, 1913)
Building and Engineering News, November 5, 1913
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1914-1953
1936 and 1951 Sanborn insurance maps (three storefronts; auto sales were at 1235 Van Ness in 1936)

B13. Remarks:

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

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)



History -- Occupants

Each of the three bays along Van Ness was devoted to a separate storefront at least into the 1950s. Per Sanborn maps, it appears that each storefront had the use of the second floor area immediately above it.

This building had continuous auto-related use from the time of its completion in 1914 through 1935 in at least one of its three storefronts, and usually in two of the storefronts, but never in all three at the same time. The most prevalent use of these storefronts was as automobile tire shops (by two businesses during 1914-1924), followed by auto financing offices (by four businesses during 1924-1935). This building also had brief use as a used car salesroom and an auto supply store.

Through the 1950s, the three storefronts had addresses of 1233, 1235-1237, and 1239-1241 Van Ness. The list of their occupants is as follows:

Tire companies

1914-1924: Tansey-Crowe Company, at #1233 Van Ness. This business was the distributor for tires made by the Pennsylvania Rubber Company, of Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Vehicular access to the building for tire installation was via a vehicle entrance on Daniel Burnham Court. Previous to 1914, the Pennsylvania Rubber Co. had had its own branch outlet on Second Street.

1914-1922: Federal Rubber Manufacturing Company, Pacific Coast Branch, at #1239-1241. This tire maker was based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1914 it moved its branch outlet to this storefront from an earlier one on Golden Gate Avenue. How autos gained access to this storefront for tire installation is unknown, unless it was through the same vehicle entrance (off Daniel Burnham Court) that served 1233 Van Ness.

Auto finance companies

1927-1935: Fisher Finance Corporation, at #1233. This firm also sold used cars here in 1927.

1924-1927: Three auto finance companies occupied the storefront at #1235 during these years: Remedial Auto Finance (1924), National Auto Loan Co. (1925-1926), and Thomas Carney (1927).

Used car sales

1929-1930: Al Hall, at #1233. He shared this storefront with the Fisher Finance Co.

Auto supply store

1933-1935: Western Auto Supply, at #1239. This was an auto supply chain with three other locations in San Francisco at this time. (See photo on page 8.)

From 1938 through 1953 this building had non-auto-related uses such as real estate, investment, and insurance offices, a cabinet making shop, a shutter company, and a fountain or café.

History -- Context

This is one of about twelve surviving buildings in the study area that had some importance as tire shops and retain at least moderate integrity. Eight of these buildings had such history dating back to the 1910s, two back to the 1920s, and two back to the 1930s. Of these twelve, eight had a history as a tire shop for at least ten years. Those eight include:

1414-1420 Van Ness (1913-1923; ten years; sold Firestone)
1233-1237 Van Ness (1914-1924; ten years; sold Pennsylvania and National tires)
1430-1480 Van Ness (1915-1924, and 1927; 11 years)
1650 Pine Street (1917-1917; ten years)
1441 Bush Street (1922-1951; about 30 years)
1501-1519 Mission (1928 to the present)
1601 Mission (1931 through at least 1964; sold Firestone)
500 Turk Street (1935 to the present; sold Goodyear)

From the above list, it can be seen that the buildings from the 1910s had tire stores for briefer periods of time – ten or eleven years – while the later buildings had tire stores for much longer periods.

1233-1237 Van Ness is in the former group, i.e. it is a very early example, with only ten years of use as a tire shop. It is one of four buildings in this group that are known to have held stores that sold national tire brands, although the two brands it sold are little-remembered today. The two storefronts in this building that held tire shops were small compared to some other tire shops in the study area.

Integrity

The first story window and door openings now have replacement frames and sash, but the exterior of this building is otherwise little changed. On balance, this building retains integrity of location, design, and association, while integrity of materials, workmanship, and feeling have been slightly diminished. Integrity of setting has also been diminished by new construction in the vicinity.

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 next page.)

History – Evaluation (continued)

Completed in 1914, this is an early example of a building that held automobile related uses. With 21 years of such use in its history (1914-1935), it has good longevity in such uses. Regarding its specific use as a tire shop, it is a very early example that sold national brands that are now little-remembered, in small storefronts for ten years, for moderate longevity in this use. This building's uses as a tire shop (selling fairly minor brands) and as an auto finance office are of lesser importance than other auto-related uses in the study area (such as auto showrooms, public garages, and general auto repair shops).

On balance, this building appears to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1, at the local level; principally as one of the earliest examples of an automobile tire shop in the study area, and also for its overall auto-related uses. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1914-1935, the years the building had these uses.

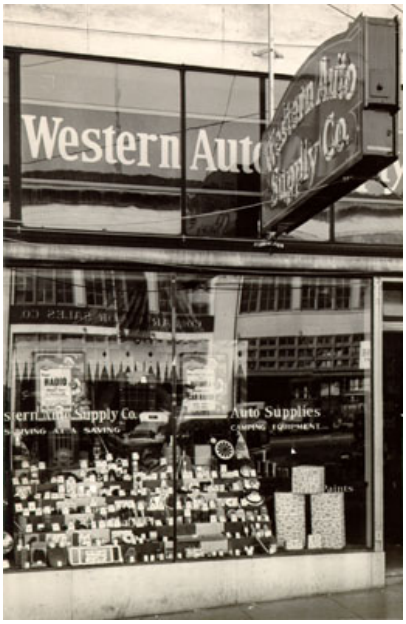
None of the proprietors of businesses in this building is known to have been individually important in his field. Accordingly, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2.

Architecturally, this building is, for its period, a somewhat finer than average example of a Classical Revival commercial building, with generally good integrity. Its best features are the two cornices, one at the top of the building and the other at the second floor level. The survival of the wooden, three-part windows in the second story is also notable. These features outweigh the alterations to the storefront windows and doors, which do take up most of the first story main façade area. This building also relates very well to its near twin adjacent to the north, #1243-1245 Van Ness, which was designed by the same architect, David C. Coleman, at the same time. Together the two buildings form a fine, half-block-long ensemble of early 20th century Classical Revival storefronts, a building type and style that is becoming rare on Van Ness Avenue. For this reason the building appears to be eligible for the California Register at the local level under Criterion 3. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1913-1914, the year of construction.

It may be worth noting that these two buildings (#1235-1237 and #1243-1245) could have been evaluated together as one development, for their architecture. However, because the focus of this study is the automobile-related history of the study area, and because #1243-1245's auto-related history is minimal, only #1233-1235 is being formally evaluated here.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building are its height and width; the scored stucco surface; the main cornice with its brackets and rope molding; the secondary cornice with its key pattern and egg-and-dart molding; and the second story windows with their mullions, transom bars, and sash.



Top photo: View looking southwest at 1243-1245 Van Ness and 1233-1237 Van Ness. To the south are the towers of the early 1980s complex known as Daniel Burnham Court.

Bottom photo: A Western Auto Supply storefront, dated 1934. Although this is not certain, it appears to be in this building. Photo from San Francisco History Center, Main Library, AAC-7601.