

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 _____

Page 1 of 13 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Pacific Nash-J. E. French 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 Location: *a: County San Francisco Not for Publication Unrestricted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 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue City San Francisco Zip 94109
 d. UTM: Zone _____; _____ mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 618, lots 1 and 1B

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

This four-story building fills two lots at the southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Washington Street. Collectively, these two lots measure 122' along Van Ness by 190' along Washington. That this building occupies two lots reflects the fact that it was built in two stages. The older portion of the building (at the corner of Van Ness and Washington) was built in 1920 and runs for 72' (five bays) along Van Ness. The addition of 1926 is adjacent to the south and runs for 50' (three bays) along Van Ness.

In structure, the building is reinforced concrete. The 1936 Sanborn map states that it had a wood truss roof but was otherwise fireproof in construction. The facades facing Van Ness and Washington are covered with a coating of stucco.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 2.)

*P3b Resource Attributes: HP7 – four-story commercial building;



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

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

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:
 Historic
 Prehistoric Both
1920-1921, 1926; building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
STEPHENS ELISA & SCOTT
79 NEW MONTGOMERY ST FL3
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94105

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

*P9. Date Recorded: _____
March 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, 2009.

*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)

CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 2 of 13
Recorded by William Kostura

Resource Identifier: 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue
*Date February 2010 Continuation Update

Description (continued):

Regarding the composition of the building, the division of the facades into bays is the strongest architectural motif. Monotony is avoided through the grouping of bays as follows:

In the older structure of 1920, all five bays in the Van Ness façade are of equal width, with the middle three bays grouped as a pavilion and the outer bays flanking this central group. This grouping was achieved by making the outer piers wider than the two inner piers. On the Washington Street façade, the two outer bays and the middle bay are slightly narrower than the others, and the separating piers were made wider or narrower to enhance this differentiation.

In the addition of 1926 (adjacent to the south, and facing Van Ness), the middle bay is much wider than the flanking bays. Thus, differentiation of bays was achieved somewhat differently in this addition than it was in the original structure, and it is clear from the sidewalk that the southern part was an addition to the northern part. However, because the materials and details of the two parts are otherwise identical, they read as two parts to the same building.

The window sash in both parts was installed very recently (2009). In the arrangement of the mullions, transoms, and muntins, and in the size of the lights, the new sash is virtually identical to the original. The sash opens differently, however. In the original windows, the outer segments opened as casements. In the present windows, the lower segments open as awnings. (See historic photos below.)

Ornament is minimalist. At the top of the building, wrapping around both facades, are a profiled cornice, consisting of a cymatium, corona, and bed molding; a blank frieze; and a thin molding beneath the frieze. Spandrels between the stories have recessed panels but are otherwise plain. A plain cornice runs along the second floor level, and beneath this is a profiled molding.

Plaster ornament in classical style that was once located at the top of the wider piers on the Van Ness side has been removed. In the first story, the walls are plain and the fenestration has been changed since the construction of 1920. The fenestration in this story is now similar to that shown in a 1950s photograph (see below), although the storefront window sash appears to be fairly recent.

One vehicle entrance can be found in the westernmost bay of the Van Ness Avenue façade. It has a non-original metal roll-up door.



Top photo: Perspective view showing both facades. Bottom photo: Detail of window and cornice.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 4 of 13

*NRHP Status Code 3CS

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue

B1. Historic Name: Pacific Nash-J. E. French auto showroom

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: auto showroom B4. Present Use: private college

*B5. Architectural Style: Classical Revival

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

Built in 1920-1921. The southern three bays were added in 1926. The first story façade was altered by the 1950s. Window sash in the three upper stories was replaced with new sash very similar to the original in 2009.

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

*B8. Related Features: none

B9a. Architect: Howard R. Schulze (1920) b. Structural engineers and builders: MacDonald and Kahn (1920)

*B10. Significance: Theme automobile industry Area San Francisco

Period of Significance 1920-1960 Property Type auto showroom 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 – Construction, owner, engineers, and architect

This building was built in two parts. The older part, at the southwest corner of Van Ness and Washington, is five bays (72') in width and was built in 1920-1921 for owner L. D. Allen as an investment. Allen had worked as a developer during the 1910s with his relative, Harry B. Allen, the primary developer of Sea Cliff. In 1917, L. D. Allen left real estate development to become an automobile dealer, selling Cole and other brands of autos. At 1835-1849 Van Ness, Allen returned to his career of real estate development to build an auto showroom, to be occupied, not by his own dealership, but for the Pacific Nash Motor Company. As was a common practice among auto showrooms in San Francisco, this occupant was selected before construction of the building began, and the building must have been designed with the specific needs of Pacific Nash in mind.

The southern three bays (50' in width) of this building was built in 1926, to designs by an unknown architect or engineer. It matched the height and closely followed the style of the original portion.

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

***B12. References:**

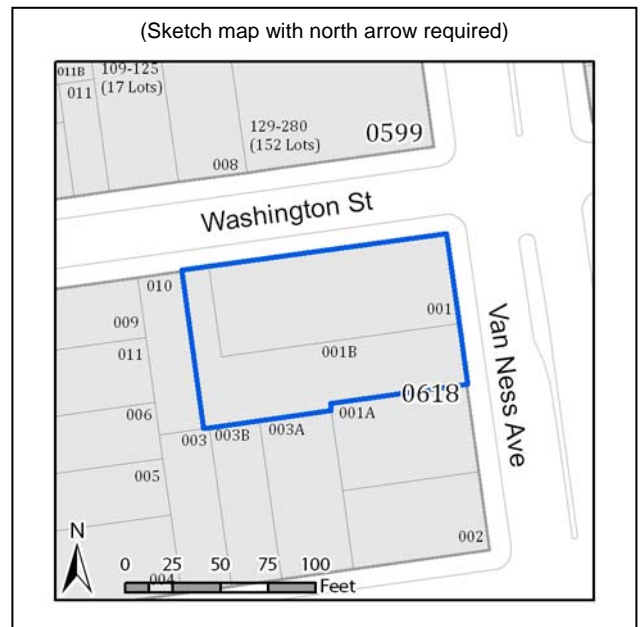
- Building permit #93854 (July 20, 1920)
- Heritage files for data regarding the 1926 addition (taken from a building permit that is no longer available)
- Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory listings for occupants of this building, 1921-1960
- 1936 Sanborn insurance map ("reinf. concrete, wood truss roof")
- Nash, Dodge, and Plymouth listings in Wikipedia website
- Continued on page 12.

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: William Kostura

Date of Evaluation: March 2010

(This space reserved for official comments.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 5 of 13
Recorded by William Kostura

Resource Identifier: 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue
*Date February 2010 Continuation Update

History – Construction, owner, engineers, and architect (continued)

The architectural designer of 1835-1849 Van Ness was Howard R. Schulze. Schulze also worked as an in-house architect for Harry B. Allen in the design of a number of Sea Cliff houses, and this association is very likely how L. D. Allen came to employ Schulze. Schulze also designed one other auto-related building in the study area of this report, at 1133 Post Street, for Allen and Company (1917). Aside from his work for Harry B. Allen and L. D. Allen, Schulze is unknown as a San Francisco architect. He never had his own office, as far as is known, and this is the only large building he is known to have worked on.

The structural engineers and building contractors for this building were MacDonald and Kahn. This partnership formed in 1907 or 1908, undoubtedly to capitalize on the rebuilding of San Francisco after the earthquake and fire of 1906. Both Alan MacDonald and Felix Kahn were engineers, and the latter co-owned a consulting firm specializing in reinforced concrete with offices in Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, and Seattle. By 1916 they were designing and building substantial, four-story reinforced concrete buildings in San Francisco. Within the study area of this report they built at least ten buildings, seven of them (including this one) of reinforced concrete (see list below). Due to their expertise in this material they became, during 1931-1935, one of the “Six Companies” that built Hoover Dam on the Colorado River.

MacDonald and Kahn usually performed all aspects of the design of the buildings they built. In such cases, they probably relied on their staff architects or draftsmen to perform the architectural aspects of their designs. On some occasions, outside architects were involved in the buildings that MacDonald and Kahn built, and in these cases the latter firm performed mainly the engineering design. Although this is not certain, at 1835-1849 Van Ness MacDonald and Kahn probably established the general architectural character of the building and performed the engineering design, leaving Howard R. Schulze to handle details such as the cornice and ornament.

One of the partners, Felix Kahn, published his thoughts on industrial design slightly over a year before construction of this building began. In “Comments on Industrial Engineering,” in *The Architect*, September 1918, he wrote:

While the fundamental requisite of a factory building must be utility, allied with it now stands attractiveness, or beauty. Beauty does not mean a lavish display of over decoration in form or color. A proper regard for proportion, mass, balance, good taste in color, disposition of members, and in the use of materials will result in attractiveness. Above all, a factory building should appear to be what it is. This does not mean that it should have a cold, hard appearance and be devoid of all architectural treatment. The employment of a minor amount of decoration or enrichment is certainly permissible. A factory building of good architectural appearance redounds to the credit side of the ledger in a variety of ways. As an advertising medium it is of decided value. A building pleasing to the eye will undoubtedly produce in the minds of the workmen a different attitude towards their work, one tending to greater enthusiasm and contentment, unconsciously creating efficiency.

Like most of MacDonald and Kahn’s buildings, 1835-1849 Van Ness closely followed these principles.

History -- Occupants

This building was occupied during its first four decades by two auto dealerships, each of which sold major brands of automobiles: Nash, during 1921-1935; then Dodge and Plymouth, during 1936-1960.

1921-1935: Pacific Nash Motor Company

The first occupant of this building was the Pacific Nash Motor Company, which was the distributor of the Nash brand of automobile in northern California during 1917-1941. Pacific Nash occupied several showrooms in San Francisco during these 24 years, and of these, 1835-1849 Van Ness was occupied by them for the longest period of time (during 1921-1935).

Nash was the successor brand to the Thomas B. Jeffery Company, which had been founded in 1902 as maker of the Rambler automobile. When Charles W. Nash purchased Jeffery in 1916, after the founder's death, he renamed the car after himself. His factory was located in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

During its entire existence Nash was a mid-priced car. According to its entry in Wikipedia, Nash's slogan was "Give the customer more than he has paid for," and the company "largely lived up" to that ideal. Nash cars were technologically advanced, thanks in part to Nash's engineer Nils Erik Wahlberg, who used wind tunnels in the design process. Nash was a popular brand for nearly all of its existence and merged with Hudson in 1954 to form American Motors Corporation (AMC). In 1957 the Nash name was phased out by AMC in favor of the revived Rambler brand.

Nash was first sold in San Francisco by the Pacific Nash Motor Company, a local dealership founded in 1917.^{*} As its name implies, its specific purpose was to sell Nash autos in northern California and in other western states.[#] Pacific Nash's first showroom was at 1525 Van Ness (extant; altered), and it remained here to early 1921. Pacific Nash must have done very well there, for it then committed to leasing the much larger building at 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue.

Negotiations for the purchase of this property by owner L. D. Allen, the lease arrangement between Allen and Pacific Nash, and the design of the building by Howard R. Schulze and engineers MacDonald and Kahn occurred simultaneously. The building was already designed when the *SF Chronicle* announced that the sale of the property to Allen had been consummated ("Auto Company to Build Home," June 12, 1920, p. 8). Construction began in July 1920 and was completed in February 1921.

At the time of opening, the front of the first story of the building was devoted to a showroom for new automobiles, and sales offices were located directly behind the showroom. Executive offices were in a mezzanine level reached by a staircase from the showroom. There were also departments for sales of trucks and used cars, service, auto painting, trim work, and custom building of autos.

(Continued next page.)

^{*} This is not counting the Jeffery/Rambler predecessor, which was sold at various San Francisco showrooms during 1908-1917. Two of these still stand: 68 Twelfth Street, and 550-590 Van Ness Avenue.

[#] When 1835-1849 Van Ness opened, Pacific Nash also had outlets in Oakland, Fresno, Salt Lake City, and Ogden, Utah. It probably also acted as distributor for Nash in other western states. Source: Ad in *SF Chronicle*, Feb. 20, 1921, p. F-8.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 7 of 13
Recorded by William Kostura

Resource Identifier: 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue
*Date February 2010 Continuation Update

History – Occupants (continued)

Pacific Nash remained in this building through 1935. In 1926 the building's owner added a fifty-foot wide addition to the south, the present southernmost three bays. Through these fifteen years the only auto brand that is known to have been sold in this building besides Nash is LaFayette, a luxury brand that was owned largely by Nash and then merged with Nash in 1924. LaFayette was sold here in that year, but then Nash discontinued the brand and turned its LaFayette plant to other uses.

In 1936, due perhaps, to the Depression, Pacific Nash Motor Company moved from 1835-1849 Van Ness to a smaller but still very substantial building, now numbered 1301-1305 Van Ness Avenue. It remained in business there until 1942, and then Nash autos were sold in that building by James Motors until 1954, the year Nash merged with Hudson to form AMC.

1937-1960: The J. E. French Company, and sales of Dodge and Plymouth

James E. French (1876-1965) held the leading role in the sales of Dodge automobiles in San Francisco for 46 years. He got his start in San Francisco's automobile industry during 1908-1914, as the manager of the Pennsylvania Rubber Company's branch automobile tires store in San Francisco. In 1914, the Dodge Brothers began to manufacture automobiles, and French then became that auto brand's first district manager San Francisco. In this capacity he managed wholesale sales of Dodge autos in the region from his office in the Flatiron Building, at 544 Market Street.

Dodge Brothers was founded in 1900 by Horace and John Dodge in Detroit. They made engine and chassis parts for various auto manufacturers and were extremely successful at this, supplying first Oldsmobile, then Ford and other brands. A San Francisco auto industry reporter stated that of 1,250,000 autos in the United States in 1914, Dodge Brothers had made parts for 500,000 of them (Pinkson, "Harrison Secures Coveted Dodge Agency," *SF Chronicle*, August 30, 1914). They had an excellent reputation for the quality of their parts.

The brothers were ambitious, and decided to manufacture their own automobiles. They built a factory and were immediately successful. According to Wikipedia, theirs became the second most popular brand in the United States by 1916. Both brothers died of illness, however, in 1920. Their widows retained control, gave the presidency to long-time employee Frederick Haynes, and began building light trucks, in which they also became a leader. The company became complacent in the design of its automobiles however, and sank to #5 nationwide by 1925. The company was then sold to investors, sank to #7, and then was sold again, in 1928, to the Chrysler Corporation. As Wikipedia states, Walter Chrysler wanted Dodge "more for its name, dealership network, and factory than for anything it was producing at the time." In 1930, Dodge Brothers became known simply as Dodge. Styling and other changes turned the brand's fortunes around. Its "Windstream" body was introduced in 1935 and was followed by the "Luxury Liner" in 1939. That body style was updated through 1942 and remained in effect (because of World War II shortages) through 1948. Then three very modern styles – the Coronet, Wayfarer, and Meadowbrook – were introduced. The former of these remained popular (with many updates) into the 1960s.

(Continued next page.)

CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 8 of 13
Recorded by William Kostura

Resource Identifier: 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue
*Date February 2010 Continuation Update

History – Occupants (continued)

When the Dodge Brothers announced they would begin building automobiles, their reputation as a parts maker was such that they did not have to aggressively search for dealerships to handle their cars, like most car makers did. San Francisco reporter Leon J. Pinkson stated that Dodge Brothers received 5,511 applications from hopeful dealers, thirty of them in San Francisco. Dodge Brothers' San Francisco agent, James E. French, selected H. O. Harrison, probably because he already had a large showroom on Van Ness Avenue (#1200) where he sold Hudson and Peerless automobiles.

Harrison was so successful selling Dodge Brothers autos in this building that he dropped the Hudson and Peerless brands and, in mid-1921, expanded to occupy the entire building. Early the next year, in what must have been a surprise to him, the Dodge Brothers company took Harrison's dealership away from him in order to award it to a new dealer. That dealer turned out to be J. E. French, who relinquished his role as district manager to sell the automobiles himself. Harrison went back to selling Hudson autos, and French opened a Dodge showroom in a new building at 910 Polk Street. The J. E. French Company continued to be the local Dodge dealership even after the sales of the national company in 1925 and to Chrysler in 1928.

In 1936 or 1937, when the much larger building at 1835-1849 Van Ness became available, the J. E. French Company moved its dealership there, and remained through 1960. The years French was at 1835-1849 Van Ness represent the years Dodge grew again in popularity through the styling changes mentioned above. In 1960 the French Company moved again, to 1699 Van Ness Avenue.

When French first occupied 1835-1949 Van Ness, he acquired a second Chrysler brand to sell, Plymouth. The J. E. French Company continued to sell Plymouth, along with Dodge, in this building through 1960. Plymouth had been founded by Chrysler in 1928 as its low-priced brand, and as such was meant to compete with Ford and Chevrolet. By 1930, Plymouth cars were being sold through all three of Chrysler corporation's divisions: Chrysler, DeSoto, and Dodge. According to Wikipedia, it became the nation's third best-selling auto (after Chevrolet and Ford), and even surpassed Ford for a time in the 1940s. Plymouth's Wikipedia entry credits the brand with helping Chrysler to survive the Great Depression. It also writes, "Through 1956, Plymouth vehicles were known for their durability, affordability, and engineering," and improved further with new styling in 1957.

Summary

This building held the Nash showroom of Pacific Nash Motor Company for fifteen years (1921-1935). It then held the Dodge and Plymouth showroom of the J. E. French Company for 23 years (1937-1960). In sum, it held showrooms for major auto brands for 38 years (through 1964, the end year of the period being studied).

Page 9 of 13
Recorded by William Kostura

Resource Identifier: 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue
*Date February 2010 Continuation Update

History -- Context

Buildings by MacDonald and Kahn in San Francisco

The largest known building that was designed and built by this firm in San Francisco was the seven-story, reinforced concrete National Paper Products Co. warehouse at 1789 Montgomery (ca. 1918). It still stands, but all of its windows have been removed, and replacement windows are deeply recessed, a major alteration.

In or adjacent to the study area of this report, MacDonald and Kahn constructed ten buildings that are known of. Seven of these were reinforced concrete buildings, all of some prominence. They included:

1563-1565 Mission (1916-1917; extant)	2001 Van Ness (1919-1920; altered)
1701 Van Ness (1917; altered)	1625 Van Ness (1919-1920; extant)
1700-1720 Van Ness (1919; demolished)	1946-1960 Van Ness (1920; extant)
1835-1849 Van Ness (1920; the building being evaluated here)	

One of these, 1835-1849 Van Ness, had a minor architect associated with the design. The others appear to have been designed as well as built by MacDonald and Kahn. One, 1625 Van Ness, is faced in brick, while the others are clad with a coat of stucco.

Nash showrooms in San Francisco

For purposes of comparison, the four buildings where this important brand was sold in San Francisco are listed below (using current addresses). (This list does not include buildings where Nash's predecessor, Thomas B. Jeffrey's, cars were briefly sold.)

1917-1921: 1525 Van Ness Avenue. This was the first home of the Pacific Nash Motor Company. This moderate-sized building has only fair integrity.

1921-1935: 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue – the building being evaluated here. It was the second, longest-lasting, and largest home of Pacific Nash Motor Company. Integrity is good.

1936-1954: 1301-1305 Van Ness Avenue. Nash was sold here, first by the Pacific Nash Motor Company (1936-1941), and then by James Motors (1942-1954). Thus, this building held a Nash showroom for 18 years, longer than any other. These years include the peak years of Nash's popularity (1949-1951). This building has the highest integrity of the four.

1955-1957: 550 Van Ness Avenue. Nash was sold here by Harvey Motors for the last few years of its existence.

Two of the above buildings, 1835-1849 Van Ness and 1301-1305 Van Ness, are clearly the most important, for they account for the bulk of the years Nash was in existence. 1835-1849 Van Ness is the older and larger example of the two, while 1301-1305 Van Ness held a Nash showroom for a longer period.

(Continued next page.)

CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 10 of 13
Recorded by William Kostura

Resource Identifier: 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue
*Date February 2010 Continuation Update

Dodge and Plymouth showrooms in San Francisco

Again, for purposes of comparison, the buildings where these brands were sold in San Francisco are listed below:

1915-1922: 1200 Van Ness Avenue. H. O. Harrison occupied the south half of this, the largest auto showroom in San Francisco when it was built, and received the first shipment of Dodge Brothers autos sold in San Francisco in early 1915. He expanded to occupy the entire building in 1921, only to lose the Dodge agency in 1922. This building has been completely altered.

1922-1936: 910 Polk Street. Dodge Brothers autos were sold here by the J. E. French Company. This one-story building covered a large area and was built for French's occupancy. It has been demolished.

1937-1960: 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue (the building being evaluated here). Dodge and Plymouth autos were sold here by the J. E. French Company. Integrity is good.

1961-1964+: 1699 Van Ness Avenue. First the J. E. French Company (briefly) and then Van Ness Dodge sold Dodge autos here. Integrity is high.

As one can see, 1835-1849 Van Ness is the only building still standing with good integrity where Dodge and Plymouth autos were sold before the 1960s. Not listed above is the ten-story office building at 540-548 Market Street, where J. E. French was district manager (wholesale) for Dodge Brothers before he opened a retail showroom.

Integrity

Plaster ornament has been removed from the top of four of the piers facing Van Ness Avenue, the original storefront facade was altered by the 1950s, and original window sash has been replaced with new sash that is nearly identical to the original. The skeletal character of the building and the texture provided by the window sash remains intact, as does the original cornice and frieze. In sum, the building retains integrity of location, materials, feeling, and association; while integrity of design and workmanship are slightly diminished; and integrity of setting is diminished through demolition or alteration of some 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*.

(Continued next page.)

CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 11 of 13
Recorded by William Kostura

Resource Identifier: 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue
*Date February 2010 Continuation Update

Evaluation (continued)

Criterion 1

Completed in 1921, this is a moderately early example of an automobile showroom. With 38 years of such use in its history (through 1964, the end year of the period being studied), it has excellent longevity in this use, which is the most important of all auto-related uses in the study area. In addition, this is one of two important Nash showrooms in San Francisco, and it is the only good example of a Dodge and Plymouth showroom. For these 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 where important brands were sold. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1921-1960, the years the building had this use.

Criterion 2

One of the auto showroom proprietors in this building was individually important in his field. James E. French was the district manager for wholesale sales of Dodge Brothers autos in the San Francisco region from the time that company began to manufacture automobiles in 1914 until 1922. Later, during 1922-1961, he owned showrooms for Dodge and Plymouth autos in San Francisco. 1835-1849 Van Ness is the only surviving showroom of his that pre-dates the 1960s. It appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2 for its association with James E. French, the most important dealer of Dodge automobiles in San Francisco's history. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1937-1960, the years French was here.

Criterion 3

Architecturally, this building is notable for the rhythm of bays across its skeletal facades and for the texture imparted by its divided windows. Although it has lost ornament from the top of four of the piers, it is still a striking example of a reinforced concrete industrial building of the period. The structural engineers, and in all likelihood the primary designers, of this building were the important firm of MacDonald and Kahn, who were also the contractors for its construction. Three examples of their work in San Francisco might be considered to be better ones: 1946-1960 Van Ness, 1625 Van Ness, and 1563-1565 Mission Street. This is a small number, and 1835-1849 Van Ness comes close to them in quality. 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 1920-1921 and 1926, the years of construction.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building are its height and width, the stucco surface, the cornice and frieze at the top of the building, the window sash in the second through fourth stories in both facades, the paneled spandrels in these stories, and the opening for the vehicle entrance in the Washington Street façade. The window and door sash and frames in the first story, and the roll-up vehicle door, are not contributing elements to the historic character of this building.

Page 12 of 13
Recorded by William Kostura

Resource Identifier: 1835-1849 Van Ness Avenue
*Date February 2010 Continuation Update

References (continued from page 4)

- Architect and Engineer*, January 1921: ad for Pabco roof products (identifies the architect and engineers).
"Auto Company to Build Home," *SF Chronicle*, June 12, 1920, p. 8.
"Nash Presents New Car Types," *SF Chronicle*, February 20, 1921, p. A41.
Leon J. Pinkson, "Details of Dodge Car Are Still Secret," *SF Chronicle*, June 18, 1914, p. 9.
_____, "Harrison Secures Coveted Dodge Agency," *SF Chronicle*, August 30, 1914, p. 47.
_____, "French Heads Dodge Agency in this City," *SF Chronicle*, March 7, 1922, p. 6.



This building as constructed in 1920-1921, before the addition to the south of 1926. Note the arched entrance in the first story, since remodeled, and the ornament atop two piers on the Van Ness side, since removed. Note also the pattern of the window sash, which remains essentially the same today. From an ad in *Architect and Engineer*, January 1921.



This building in the 1950s. The three bays to the south (at left) constitute the addition of 1926. The first story has already been altered, and is very similar in character to how it is today. The ornament atop the piers is still in place in this photo. From the SF Public Library, Assessor's negatives.