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MEMORANDUM: Historic Resource Evaluation Response

MEA Planner: Leigh Kienker

Project Address: 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue
Block: 595 **Lot:** 013
Case No.: 2007.0519E
Date of Review: 11/15/07

Planning Department Reviewer:
Dan DiBartolo
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Preparer / Consultant

Name: Patrick McGrew
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Owner

Name: Nick Podell
Company: 1645 Pacific Avenue LLC
Address: 1201 Howard Street Ste 201
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Phone: 650-581-6600
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PROPOSED PROJECT

- Demolition
 Alteration

Project description: The proposed project site involves one assessor's lot with two existing separate structures upon it. Components of the project include the following aspects;

- 1645 Pacific Avenue: the demolition of the existing two-story commercial garage structure at the east portion of the lot, constructed circa 1895;
- 1661 Pacific Avenue: the demolition of the existing one-story commercial garage structure at the west portion of the lot, constructed in 1907;
- The construction of one new 65 foot tall building that would contain approximately 49 to 52 residential units with 1:1 parking proposed.

Pre-Existing Historic Rating / Survey:

- Lot 016 contains two separate structures:
- 1645 Pacific Avenue, constructed as a riding academy was constructed in 1895, not listed in any architectural survey.
- 1661 Pacific Avenue, constructed as depository was constructed in 1907, not listed in any architectural survey.

Both structures on the lot were constructed before 1913 and are considered as Category B structures. These properties may be considered "historic resources" because of their rarity and, for some, their association with the reconstruction after the City's 1906 earthquake.

Historic District / Neighborhood Context:

The subject lot, Lot 013, contains two separate structures, 1645 and 1661 Pacific Avenue and is located on the south side of the street between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street, in the northern portion of the Van Ness commercial district in San Francisco. It is surrounded by commercial and residential land uses. The site is within the Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) and a 65-A Height and Bulk District.

The area is characterized by larger commercial, mixed-use and residential structures located along Van Ness Avenue with smaller commercial and residential buildings located on the side streets and Polk Street. The site is located at the northern portion of the undocumented eligible "Auto Row" historic district. The immediate vicinity contains a mix of residential, mixed-use and commercial structures. However, most of the structures on the block consist of one to two story commercial buildings, with a range of uses that include auto-related buildings, including both of the buildings at the proposed project site.

1.) California Register Criteria of Significance: Note, a building may be an historical resource if it meets any of the California Register criteria listed below. If more information is needed to make such a determination please specify what information is needed. *(This determination for California Register Eligibility is made based on existing data and research provided to the Planning Department by the above named preparer / consultant and other parties. Key pages of report and a photograph of the subject building are attached.)*

Lot #013 (aka 1645 Pacific Avenue):

- **Event:** or Yes No Unable to determine
- **Persons:** or Yes No Unable to determine
- **Architecture:** or Yes No Unable to determine
- **Information Potential:** Further investigation recommended.

District or Context Yes, may contribute to a potential district or significant context

If Yes, Period of significance: 1900 - 1970

Lot #013, (aka 1661 Pacific Avenue):

- **Event:** or Yes No Unable to determine
- **Persons:** or Yes No Unable to determine
- **Architecture:** or Yes No Unable to determine
- **Information Potential:** Further investigation recommended.

District or Context Yes, may contribute to a potential district or significant context

Notes:

1645 Pacific Avenue:

1645 Pacific Avenue occupies the east portion of the subject lot with the adjacent 1661 Pacific Avenue (with which it was merged) and is a two-story, approximately 26 foot tall commercial structure that occupies a rectangular footprint that is approximately 100' wide by 127'-8". The date of the original construction of the building is circa 1895 and was built as the purpose built San Francisco Riding Academy. Following the earthquake, the Riding Academy relocated to Seventh Avenue and the building was put to a new use. By 1917, the building was being used as an electric garage and has subsequently housed several auto oriented tenants. Alterations in 1922 and

especially in 1969 have resulted in the building's current appearance. The building's principal facade on the Pacific Avenue frontage is detailed with cement plaster and industrial sash windows, all which appear to date from the 1969 remodel.

1645 Pacific Avenue does not appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register as an individual resource under Criteria 1, 2, or 3. Further, the structure does not appear to be a contributor to a potential California Register Historic District based on the history of the area as an "Auto Row." While there is evidence of the original massing of the structure, due to several major alterations and additions, the building does not feature sufficient detail of its original style and use, therefore the property does not meet Criterion 1 (Events) and 3 (Architecture) to be a contributor to a potential "Auto Row" historic district in the area. Further, the alterations to the site have not gained significance and do not in themselves cause any of the buildings to meet Criteria 3.

1661 Pacific Avenue:

1661 Pacific Avenue occupies the west portion of the subject lot with the adjacent 1645 Pacific Avenue (with which it was merged) and is a one-story approximately 18 foot high flat roof commercial garage structure that occupies a rectangular footprint that is 25' wide by 127'-8". The building was built in 1907 and is one of many small commercial structures that were built in the immediate neighborhood after the 1906 earthquake and fire. Originally a depository (Corrigan's Depository), research of Sanborn Maps by staff indicates that the building had been converted to an automotive repair shop by November, 1930. The building scale and massing at the street frontage is retained as the building form still clearly conveys its use as a small commercial building constructed in the period following the 1906 earthquake and fire. The building contains a large central opening which has been used for the automotive uses occurring at the site. The façade is further articulated by use of an ornamental band of tile in a modified Greek key pattern, surmounted by a single course of sheet tin shaped to resemble Spanish tile roofing. Adjacent and west of the large vehicular opening is located a single pedestrian opening above which is an industrial transom window with 10 multi-pane lights. The remainder of the façade has a cement plaster or stucco clad treatment.

1661 Pacific Avenue does not appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register as an individual resource under Criteria 1, 2, or 3. However, the building appears to be eligible for listing in the California Register as a contributor to a potential historic district based on its significance under Criterion 1 (Events) and Criterion 3 (Architecture). The nearby and immediate neighborhood contains a high concentration of buildings that were a part of San Francisco's "Auto Row", which was located along Van Ness Avenue and extended onto the side streets. Van Ness Avenue developed into auto row after the 1906 earthquake, though the true extent of this district is not known and the extent of the district aforementioned is not definitive as the eligible district is still yet undocumented.

Development followed the typical pattern for auto uses, with the large showroom buildings along Van Ness Avenue (especially on prominent corner sites) and smaller one-to-two-story garages, auto body fabricators and part shops located along the mid-block or on the intersecting streets. Many of the blocks along Van Ness Avenue from the Civic Center to Pine Street are bisected into smaller blocks by a series of intersecting alleys, which allowed building showrooms to have two frontages: one façade serving as the primary, or 'front', and another as the 'rear' or service. While the auto use began to cluster on Van Ness Avenue shortly after the 1906 earthquake and fire, the development continued through the 1920's and the area remained a central hub of automobile use through the 1970's. As a result of this development, there is

considerable harmony among the buildings throughout the area, both in building type (automobile uses broken into showroom and ancillary uses) and in building style. Most building details are intact; while there have been some alterations to buildings, the majority still possesses the basic form and architectural detailing associated with their style from when they were originally constructed. There are several San Francisco Landmarks along Van Ness Avenue, (1000 Van Ness Avenue, Landmark #152), as well as National Register Landmarks (1699 Van Ness Avenue) that are significant based on their association with the automotive industry in this area. Further, the Van Ness Area Plan calls out 33 buildings along Van Ness Avenue and side streets as being individually significant, and lists approximately 88 buildings in the area that are contributors to the significance of this area based on their significance with the automobile industry. A California Register Historic District exists in the area based on the area's development and history as an "Auto Row", meeting Criterion 1 (Events) and based on the high concentration of architecturally unified buildings (based on automobile use), meeting Criterion 3 (Architecture).

1661 Pacific Avenue is a contributor to this California Register historic district. 1661 Pacific Avenue was converted into auto use at some point in time before November 1930 when Sanborn Maps and written supporting documentation verify that the use was an automobile repair facility. It has served as auto use in some form or another since. This is in line with the development of the area as Auto Row. Further, the Pacific Avenue façade is indicative of the type of commercial building and vernacular style that was built on the block and in the area in the years immediately following the 1906 earthquake and fire. The site itself follows the historic pattern of development – the 'commercial repair shop' façade is typical of the many that developed surrounding the auto showrooms and were located on cross streets and alleys intersecting Van Ness between Franklin and Polk Streets. Though not as elaborate as the auto showrooms, buildings, such as 1661 Pacific Avenue, nonetheless convey similar concrete construction techniques with a simplified ornamental commercial style. Based on this evidence, the structure at 1661 Pacific Avenue is a contributor to the potential "Auto Row" historic district.

2.) Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be a resource for the purposes of CEQA, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the California Register criteria, but it also must have integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The subject property has retained or lacks integrity from the period of significance noted above:

1645 Pacific Avenue:

location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
design	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks
materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks
workmanship	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks
setting	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks
feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks
association	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks

Notes: 1645 Pacific Avenue contains a low degree of integrity. The building is in its original location. However, due to major alterations to this building throughout the past several decades, it does not retain integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association.

1661 Pacific Avenue:

location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
workmanship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
setting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
feeling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
association	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks

Notes: 1661 Pacific Avenue retains a high degree of integrity from its period of significance, despite alterations during its lifetime. Although it should be noted that there are no exact records that the storefront design that existed prior to installation of the large vehicular opening, records show that the building was converted to auto related use by November 1930. This is when the building gains its significance as a contributor to a potential "Auto Row" historic district. Other than the aforementioned installation of the vehicular opening at the front façade, the building scale and massing at the street frontage is retained as the building form still clearly conveys its use as a small commercial building constructed in the period following the 1906 earthquake and fire. The façade is further articulated by use of an ornamental band of tile in a modified Greek key pattern, surmounted by a single course of sheet tin shaped to resemble Spanish tile roofing. Adjacent and west of the vehicular opening is located a single pedestrian opening above which is an industrial transom window with 10 multi-pane lights. The remainder of the façade has a cement plaster or stucco clad treatment.

Despite the above the above described alteration, 1661 Pacific Avenue still retains its historic appearance, and conveys its significance as an automobile related use. These elements contribute to the building retaining integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.

3.) DETERMINATION Whether the property is an "historical resource" for purposes of CEQA

1645 Pacific Avenue:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Resource Present
(Go to 6. below) | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Resource Present
(Continue to 4.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Category A (1/2) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Category B |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Category C |

1661 Pacific Avenue:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No Resource Present
(Go to 6. below) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historical Resource Present
(Continue to 4.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Category A (1/2) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Category B |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Category C |

4.) If the property appears to be an historical resource, whether the proposed project is consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards or if any proposed modifications would materially impair the resource (i.e. alter in an adverse manner those physical characteristics which justify the property's inclusion in any registry to which it belongs).

- The project appears to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. (go to 6. below)
(Optional) See attached explanation of how the project meets standards.
- The project is **NOT** consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and is a significant impact as proposed. (Continue to 5. if the project is an alteration)

The proposed project for Assessor's Block 0595, Lot 013 calls for the demolition of the structure at 1661 Pacific Avenue. 1661 Pacific Avenue is a historic resource because it is a contributor to a potential California Register Historic District based on this neighborhood's significance as "Auto Row."

The proposal for 1661 Pacific Avenue is not consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The proposal will adversely impact the structure's integrity of design, materials, setting, feeling, association, and workmanship – all of which form the character-defining features that give the building significance as a historic resource.

The proposed project is not consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular Standards 1, 2, 5, and 9. Of note are:

- Standard 2: The historic character of the property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- Standard 5: Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

In sum, since the proposal calls for the demolition of a historic resource, it does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, which calls for the retention and preservation of historic resources, not for the demolition of them.

5.) Character-defining features of the building to be retained or respected in order to avoid a significant adverse effect by the project, presently or cumulatively, as modifications to the project to reduce or avoid impacts. Please recommend conditions of approval that may be desirable to mitigate the project's adverse effects.

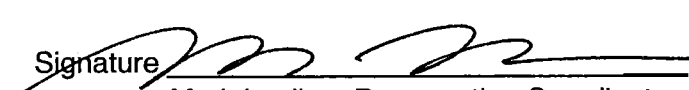
1661 Pacific Avenue should be retained and preserved. The building form and character defining features of the structure should be retained and incorporated into design aspects of the proposed project. Moreover, merely saving the façade of this building is not sufficient and does not meet the Secretary's Standards; the building should still be able to convey its story as a contributor to the potential "Auto Row" historic district and should convey that it served automobile uses for the majority of its' 100 year history.

6.) Whether the proposed project may have an adverse effect on off-site historical resources, such as adjacent historic properties.

Yes No Unable to determine

The proposed project at the subject site 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue (Assessor's Block 0595, Lot 013), specifically the demolition of the building at 1661 Pacific Avenue, will have an adverse impact on a potential California Register Historic District located in this portion of the Van Ness commercial corridor. As noted above, the area contains a high concentration of buildings that were constructed and converted for automobile use and there is considerable architectural harmony among the buildings in the area.

PRESERVATION COORDINATOR REVIEW

Signature 
Mark Luellen, Preservation Coordinator

Date: 11-15-07

cc: S. Banks, Recording Secretary, Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board
Vernaliza Byrd Historic Resource Impact Review File

