



## COMMENTS & RESPONSES

# 1645 Pacific Avenue Project

PLANNING DEPARTMENT CASE NO. 2007.0519E

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NO. 2008102012

Draft EIR Publication Date:	NOVEMBER 18, 2009
Draft EIR Public Hearing Date:	DECEMBER 10, 2009
Draft EIR Public Comment Period:	NOVEMBER 18, 2009 to JANUARY 19, 2010
Final EIR Certification hearing Date:	OCTOBER 28, 2010



SAN FRANCISCO  
PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT

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October 14, 2010

To: Members of the Planning Commission and  
Interested Parties

From: Bill Wycko, Acting Environmental Review Officer

Re: Attached Comments and Responses to Draft Environmental Impact Report  
Case No. 2007.0519E: 1645 Pacific Avenue

The attached Comments and Responses document, responding to comments made on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the 1645 Pacific Avenue Project, is presented for your information. This document, along with the DEIR, will be considered by the Planning Commission during a public meeting on October 28, 2010, at which time the Commission will determine whether to certify the EIR as complete and adequate.

We are sending this Comments and Responses document to you for your review prior to the public meeting. The Commission does not conduct a hearing to receive comments on the Comments and Responses document, since no such hearing is required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Interested parties may, however, write to the Commission members or to the President of the Commission at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94103, and express opinions about the Comments and Responses document, or the Commission's decision to certify the completion of the Final EIR for this project. Letters should be sent in time to be received at 1650 Mission Street by Wednesday, October 27, 2010, the day before the Planning Commission meeting on October 28, 2010 at which time EIR certification will be determined.

Please note that if you receive a copy of the Comments and Responses document in addition to the DEIR published on November 18, 2009, you will technically have a copy of the Final EIR. Thank you for your interest in this project.

If you have questions about the attached Comments and Responses document, or about this process, please call **Brett Bollinger** at (415) 575-9024 or e-mail him at [brett.bollinger@sfgov.org](mailto:brett.bollinger@sfgov.org).

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City and County of San Francisco  
Planning Department

## **1645 PACIFIC AVENUE PROJECT**

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## **COMMENTS AND RESPONSES**

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## **Planning Department Case No. 2007.0519E**

State Clearinghouse No. 2008102012

October 14, 2010

Draft EIR Publication Date: November 18, 2009

Draft EIR Public Hearing Date: December 10, 2009

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**1645 Pacific Avenue Project  
Draft Environmental Impact Report**

**COMMENTS AND RESPONSES**

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## A. INTRODUCTION

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This document contains public comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) prepared for the proposed 1645 Pacific Avenue Project, and responses to those comments. Also included are staff-initiated text changes and revisions to correct errors found in the DEIR.

Following this introduction, Section B contains a list of all persons and organizations who submitted written comments on the DEIR and who testified at the public hearing on the DEIR held on December 10, 2009.

Section C contains all substantive comments made at the DEIR public hearing before the Planning Commission on December 10, 2009, and comment letters received during the DEIR public review period from November 18, 2009 to January 19, 2010. All comment letters and the transcript of the public hearing on the 1645 Pacific Avenue Project are presented in their entirety in Appendices 1 and 2, respectively.

The comments and responses (C&R) component of the environmental review process is intended to respond to comments on the adequacy of the approach and analysis in a DEIR in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Comments regarding the merits of and concerns about the project should be directed to the Planning Commission to assist with its decision making on whether or not to approve the project, a decision that will be made at a public hearing subsequent to certification (determination of adequacy under CEQA) of the Final EIR. Some comments do not pertain to physical environmental issues, but, in some instances, responses are included to provide additional information for use by decision makers.

These comments and responses will be incorporated into the Final EIR as a new chapter. Text changes resulting from comments and responses will also be incorporated in the Final EIR as noted in the responses and in Section E, DEIR Revisions. Deletions of the DEIR text are shown with ~~striketrough~~ and

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additions are shown with double underline, except where text is indicated as entirely new to allow for ease of reading.

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## B. LIST OF PERSONS COMMENTING

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The following individuals submitted written comments during the public comment period November 18, 2009 through January 19, 2010, and/or provided oral testimony at the public hearing on December 10, 2009, on the 1645 Pacific Avenue Project DEIR.

### San Francisco Planning Commission

Michael Antonini, Planning Commissioner (oral comments, Planning Commission Public Hearing, December 10, 2009)

Kathrin Moore, Planning Commissioner (oral comments, Planning Commission Public Hearing, December 10, 2009)

Hisashi Sugaya, Planning Commissioner (oral comments, Planning Commission Public Hearing, December 10, 2009)

### Historic Preservation Commission

Charles Chase, Interim President, Historic Preservation Commission (hearing minutes, Historic Preservation Commission Hearing, December 2, 2009)

Courtney Damkroger, Historic Preservation Commissioner (hearing minutes, Historic Preservation Commission Hearing, December 2, 2009)

Karl Hasz, Historic Preservation Commissioner (hearing minutes, Historic Preservation Commission Hearing, December 2, 2009)

Alan Martinez, Historic Preservation Commissioner (hearing minutes, Historic Preservation Commission Hearing, December 2, 2009)

Diane Matsuda, Historic Preservation Commissioner (hearing minutes, Historic Preservation Commission Hearing, December 2, 2009)

Andrew Wolfram, Historic Preservation Commissioner (hearing minutes, Historic Preservation Commission Hearing, December 2, 2009)

### Associations

Middle Polk Neighborhood Association – John Faust, Wylie Adams, Patricia Sonnino (written comments, January 14, 2010; oral comments, Planning Commission Public Hearing, December 10, 2009); Dawn

B. LIST OF PERSONS COMMENTING

Trennert, Patricia Sonnino, Frank Cannata, John Faust, Leslie Ball, Wylie Adams, Ann Thilges (oral comments, Planning Commission Public Hearing, December 10, 2009)

Pacific Avenue Neighborhood Association, Robyn Tucker (oral comments, Planning Commission Public Hearing December 10, 2009)

Russian Hill Community Association – Kathleen Courtney, Chair (written comments, December 9, 2009).

**Groups and Individuals**

Bill & Diane Carroll, residents (written comments, December 11, 2009; oral comments, Planning Commission Public Hearing December 10, 2009).

Barbara M. Failing, resident (written comments, November 20, 2009)

James Joannides, resident (oral comments, Planning Commission Public Hearing December 10, 2009)

Michael Schoolnik, resident (oral comments, Planning Commission Public Hearing December 10, 2009)

Elizabeth Shaw, resident (written comments, received November 23, 2009)

Lorri Ungaretti, resident (written comments, November 23, 2009)

Mark Whisler, Whisler Financial Group (written comments, January 2, 2009 [sic] [2010])

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## C. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

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All comments received are presented herein by direct quotation, and edited to delete repetition and non-substantive material only. When necessary, minor edits have been made to the public hearing transcript for clarification. Editorial changes to the comments are indicated by square brackets ([ ]).

Comments and responses are organized according to the order of topic areas as they appear in the DEIR.

Each comment is numbered and followed by a corresponding numbered response. The name of the commenter follows each comment in italic font and parentheses, e.g., (*John Smith, written comments*). In some cases, comments that are substantively similar have been grouped and addressed with a single response, or in other cases comments from individual commenters may be divided among several topic areas.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Comment #1

"The DEIR on page 25 lists as part of the project:

"excluding 16 feet of the Penthouse."

"Is there to be a penthouse for this project or not? Or is the roof pad merely the foundation for the wink and nod 'Penthouse' to be added later. Or does the penthouse fall under the city onsite square footage allowance changes allowed by the building Department? Since it has been mentioned in the project as part of the project has it been backdoored [sic] allowed? Since this is not clear the penthouse should be prohibited as a mitigation measure." (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

### Response #1

Two recessed mechanical penthouses, one 9 feet in height for a stairway and one 16 feet in height for an elevator, are proposed as part of the project to provide access, including disabled access, to the roof deck, as shown in Figures 10, page 20, and Figure 12, page 22, and described in the third full paragraph of page 26 of the DEIR. The penthouses would not contain occupied residential space. Mechanical penthouses are not included in the calculation of number of dwelling units or Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of commercial space allowed in the Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD). *Planning Code* Section 723.1 (Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial District) identifies the sections of the *Planning Code* with height, bulk, and FAR controls that are applicable to the Polk Street NCD.

As noted in the comment, Table 1, page 25 of the DEIR states that the height of the building is "65 feet, excluding 16 feet of the penthouse." For the purpose of determining compliance with the 65-foot height limit that applies to the proposed project, mechanical penthouses covering no more than 20 percent of the roof area are excluded per Section 260(b)(1)(B) of the *Planning Code*, which states that features exempt from height limits include "Elevator, stair and mechanical penthouses, fire towers, skylights and dormer windows. This exemption shall be limited to the top 10 feet of such features where the height limit is 65 feet or less, and the top 16 feet of such features where the height limit is more than 65 feet. However, for elevator penthouses, the exemption shall be limited to the top 16 feet and limited to the footprint of the elevator shaft, regardless of the height limit of the building." Thus, the description of the proposed building height and of the two stair and elevator penthouses in the DEIR is accurate and consistent with the *Planning Code*.

The comment advocating prohibition of the penthouse does not pertain to physical environmental issues, and does not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions. As a statement of opposition to the proposed project, or a statement in favor of other values, the comment will be transmitted to, and considered by, the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document and will be considered by that body prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

## COMPATIBILITY WITH ZONING, PLANS, AND POLICIES

### Comment #2

“Supposedly the rear yard would be 32’ deep but that is only on the sub-level with 12’ of the 32’ being private patios. On the next level up and going to the top, the building is bumped out in the rear allowing only 20’ to the rear area. That does not leave enough open space as required by code.” (*Bill and Diane Carroll, written comments*)

### Response #2

The proposed rear yard would be 32 feet deep on all levels of the building above the basement garage level and 12.5 feet deep at the basement level (see Figures 5, 13, and 14, on pages 15, 23, and 24). Thirty-two feet is 25 percent of overall lot depth, and would comply with the rear yard requirements of the Polk Street NCD, which requires a 25 percent rear yard on all levels containing dwelling units (i.e., the ground floor and above) (*Planning Code* Section 134(a)(1), Rear Yards, R, NC, C, SPD, M, MUG, MUO, MUR, UMU, RSD, SLR and SSO Districts). No rear yard is required at the basement level. The basement building footprint would be 14,110 sq.ft., which would cover approximately 88 percent of the 15,959-sq.ft. lot. The reason there is an apparent discrepancy in rear yard versus lot coverage is that the parking garage would be underground and extend underneath the rear yard. This below-ground extension is included in the calculation of lot coverage, but is not included in the calculation of rear yard. All patios, bays, and balconies projecting into the rear yard comply with Section 136 of the *Planning Code* (Obstructions Over Streets and Alleys and in Required Setbacks, Yards and Usable Open Space). Specifically, all bays and balconies would be (1) a maximum of 10 feet in width, (2) project no more than 3 feet into the rear yard, (3) separated by no less than 5 feet, and (4) have a total width of all bays less than 2/3 the length of the wall. The total length of all balconies and bays would be a maximum of 48 percent of the length of the wall.

The upper floors of the building contain bay windows/balconies, which extend over the rear yard, as allowed by the *Planning Code* Section 136. These permitted bay windows/balconies do not affect the measurement of the rear yard, which, as discussed above, complies with *Planning Code* requirements.



## LAND USE AND LAND USE PLANNING

### Comment #3

“After plowing through this report for 1645 Pacific project, several misleading items pop out, one of which is the location of the project. 1645 Pacific is located in the Nob Hill area, not in the Russian Hill area as written up. According to all the City maps, Russian Hill begins north of Broadway.” (*Bill and Diane Carroll, written comments*)

### Response #3

The commenter is correct. The project site is located in the Nob Hill area—a 54-block neighborhood defined by Broadway on the north, Van Ness Avenue on the west, Stockton Street on the east, and California Street on the south.<sup>1</sup> On the City’s SF Find GIS website, the City identifies 117 distinct neighborhoods within the City’s planning boundaries, representing smaller localized neighborhoods.

The following changes are made in the DEIR:

Page S-1, third paragraph, first sentence is changed as follows:

The 1645 Pacific Avenue project site is in San Francisco’s ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill neighborhood on the south side of Pacific Avenue between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street (Assessor’s Block 0595, Lot 013).

Page S-5, fourth paragraph is changed as follows:

The No Project Alternative would not meet the objectives of the project sponsor to construct a mixed-use residential-retail building and associated parking in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area.

Page S-8, second paragraph, the sentence is changed as follows:

The Preservation Alternative would partially meet the project sponsor’s objectives to construct a high-quality, cost-effective mixed-use residential-retail building and associated parking in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area because this alternative’s building would be approximately 20 percent smaller than the proposed project.

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<sup>1</sup> City and County of San Francisco, Mayor’s Office of Business and Economic Development, SFProspector, <http://gispub02.sfgov.org/website/sfprospector/ed.asp?cmd=pan&dir=NE&maxx=6008138.14111842&miny=6000130.3944079&miny=2113036.57401316&maxy=2118860.38980262&vis=nei,opn,&nvis=ncorcor,aer,ent,frn,red,gar,sch,sup,tr,af,zip,zon,mun,prt,monsnei,centract,&p=11&t=1&x1=&y1=&label=&city=&zipcode=&thetype=&minsize=0&maxsize=9999999999999999&units=&selid=&report=&distance=&s=15&sic=&parcel=&address=&forsale=no&leaserate=&forlease=no&entzone=no&fedrenew=no&geotype=&geo=>

Accessed June 23, 2010.

C. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Page 7, the first bullet item is changed as follows:

In response to San Francisco's housing demand and the need for neighborhood retail space, construct a high-quality, cost-effective, mixed-use residential-retail building and associated parking in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area.

Page 8, first paragraph, the first sentence is changed as follows:

The rectangular 15,959-square-foot (sq.ft.) project site is located on the south side of Pacific Avenue between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street (Assessor's Block 0595, Lot 013) in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area of San Francisco.

Page 37, the first sentence is changed as follows:

The proposed project would add to the intensity of land use within the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill and Van Ness areas.

Page 37, lines 6 and 7 are changed as follows:

The proposed project would add to the intensity of land use within the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill and Van Ness areas

Page 46, lines 4 through 7 are changed as follows:

projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area that have been approved or are currently under review. Although these projects would result in an incremental change in the visual character of this portion of Pacific Avenue, the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor, and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area, they would be consistent with and would not substantially

Page 48, Impact Analysis, first paragraph, second line is changed as follows:

alter existing development patterns in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area or in San Francisco as a whole. Table 2:

Page 51, Cumulative Impacts, first paragraph, third line is changed as follows:

Projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

Page 54, Cumulative Archeological Resource Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. These projects, in combination with the proposed

Page 60, Cumulative Historic Architectural Resources Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or are under review. These projects, in

Page 92, Cumulative Noise Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. These projects, in combination with the proposed

Page 125, Cumulative Wind Impacts, first paragraph, fourth line is changed as follows:

(generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been

Page 132, Cumulative Shadow Impacts, first paragraph, fourth line is changed as follows:

projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

Page 133, fifth line is changed as follows:

dispersion of these projects throughout the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area

Page 135, Cumulative Recreation Impacts, first paragraph, third line is changed as follows:

(generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have

Page 140, Cumulative Utilities and Service Systems Impacts, first paragraph, fourth line is changed as follows:

projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

Page 143, Cumulative Utilities Public Services Impacts, first paragraph, fourth line is changed as follows:

projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

Page 145, Cumulative Impacts, first paragraph, fourth line is changed as follows:

projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

Page 150, Cumulative Geology and Soils Impacts, first paragraph, fourth to ninth lines are changed as follows:

units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. As discussed above, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on geology and soils, and the other projects are also subject to CEQA requirements for mitigation of impacts on geology and soils. Due to the distance of these cumulative projects throughout the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue

C. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area and the nature of their potential geological impacts, these

Page 155, Cumulative Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. As discussed above, the

Page 162, Cumulative Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. These projects, in combination with the proposed

Page 164, Cumulative Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. As discussed above, the proposed project would

Page 166, second line is changed as follows:

~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. As discussed above, the proposed project would

Page 172, Impacts, second paragraph, last line is changed as follows:

the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill and Van Ness areas.

Page 178, last paragraph, second line is changed as follows:

quality, cost-effective, mixed-use residential-retail building and associated parking in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

**Comment #4**

"2) Neighborhood Serving Service Buildings.

"This building proposes replacing a neighborhood serving service building and no study was made of this projects [impacts] (or the cumulative impacts) on the availability of similar services in the neighborhood in recent years, and no mitigation measure proposed for this." (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #4**

The project would replace buildings now used for off-street parking and auto repair. The availability of neighborhood services, and the effect of the proposed project on these services, is a socioeconomic impact, which does not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions made in the DEIR. Therefore, it would not be relevant or necessary under CEQA to evaluate the effect of the proposed project on neighborhood services as part of the environmental impact analysis.

**Comment #5**

“The benefits that open space and light [have] on the pedestrian experience and commercial vitality is widely known and intuitive. While the proposed development includes its own commercial space, there is already a vibrant and active commercial stretch across the street that should be taken into account. The size of the proposed structure speaks for itself. There will be considerable impact neighboring dwelling units, open space, yards, surrounding areas and the general climate around the project.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“My name is Robyn Tucker, and I am the co-chair for the Pacific Avenue Neighborhood Association commonly known as MPNA [sic, PANA].

“I’m before you today to share with you that from our perspective the DEIR fails to acknowledge the importance of our City’s forefathers in their planning for our great City’s skyline in the neighborhood design that allows for light and air. Yes, we do continue to come before the Planning Commission to raise these issues. We do so because it is important.

“Light, air, and skylines are important to our neighborhoods and the City at large. MPNA [or PANA] and other neighborhood groups worked for years to ensure these qualities would be preserved. That effort most recently resulted in the rezoning of Pacific Avenue.

“As we contemplate future developments, we must keep in mind and we urge the Planning Commission not only the beautiful and interesting skylines, but also the darkness that is created by massive block-building design. Once built the light is gone forever.

“I witness on the streets everyday people crossing the streets and walking down the block in my own neighborhood to seek out sunlight as [they wait] for the buses. They’re of all ages, particularly some of our more elderly.

“In addition, though they may not have foreseen the economic and development conditions we are now experiencing, City planners historically and presently did and do think about this one thing that San Francisco—that adds charm to San Francisco and that is that staggered rooftops. It provides light and air and character to our neighborhoods. Developers are attempting to piggyback on Van Ness zoning, which is inappropriate for this neighborhood.

“We sincerely welcome new development. We ask that developers consider the quality and nature of the existing neighborhood in designing and building new developments. The cumulative effect of building the size proposed by 1645 Pacific Developers is a dark, windy and cold neighborhood in the City.” (*Robin Hunter, Pacific Avenue Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

**Response #5**

As noted in the DEIR, pages 126 to 132, the proposed project would shade adjacent properties, but would not increase the total amount of shading in the neighborhood above levels that are common and generally accepted in urban areas, and would be considered a less-than-significant impact. It should be noted that shading of private property is not considered a significant environmental impact under CEQA. (Also see Response #32 regarding shadows).

As discussed on page 36 of the DEIR, the project would intensify use of the project site, but would be compatible with the existing dense character of the Pacific Avenue, Polk Street and Van Ness Avenue corridors in the project vicinity, as well as be compatible with the size, character, and mix of uses that exist in the area.

The less-than-significant cumulative land use impacts of the project are discussed on page 37 of the DEIR. On page 35 of the DEIR (and in Responses #16 and #17), it is stated that the project is consistent with the applicable Polk Street NCD zoning and the applicable 65-foot height limit of the 65-A Height and Bulk District.

The environmental review process that is carried out in the publication of the EIR is intended to provide decision makers with an analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed project, and does not indicate a decision on the part of decision makers whether to approve the project or one of its alternatives.

**Comment #6**

“Land Use Impacts Compatibility with Planning and Policies. The Polk Street NCD is a mixed-use neighborhood of small scaled, locally owned retail stores that have traditionally served the Russian Hill, Nob Hill districts as well as the other surrounding neighborhoods.

“Included in the mix (on traversal streets such as Jackson and Pacific) are the additional small commercial shops and auto-related businesses that once supported the Van Ness Street car showrooms. These small industrial spaces and businesses are rapidly being demolished and replaced with speculative housing projects. The mixed-use character of the neighborhood is cumulatively being altered by this trend, simplifying the once rich variety of uses to only housing and retail.

“While the individual buildings may not always be strictly historically significant, all of these small contextual industrial buildings contribute to the look, feel, and function of the neighborhood. As such the proposed project may conflict with the City Planning Code Section 101.1, policies 1 [and] 2:

“1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced;

“2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods;

“Opting for ... smaller-scaled preservation alternatives seem a better development choice since they would have less impact on neighborhood character preservation.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

**Response #6**

CEQA does not consider the socioeconomic effects of a project to be environmental impacts.

Section 15131(a) of the *CEQA Guidelines* states “Economic or social effects of a project shall not be

treated as significant effects on the environment.” Further, the impacts analyzed in an EIR must be related to a physical change (*CEQA Guidelines* 15131(b)).

Policy 1 of the Priority Policies concerns retail uses and their employment and ownership. The effect of the proposed project on retail uses is a socioeconomic impact, which does not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions under CEQA. Therefore, the effect of the proposed project on retail uses was not addressed in the EIR.

Policy 2 concerns housing and neighborhood character. As discussed on page 36 of the DEIR, the project would be compatible with the dense, urban, mixed-use character of the project vicinity, would not introduce new land uses to the project vicinity, and would be compatible with the existing dense character of the Pacific Avenue, Polk Street and Van Ness Avenue corridors in the project vicinity, as well as be compatible with the size, character, and mix of uses that exist in the area. For these reasons, the DEIR concluded that the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse impact on the prevalent land use character of the vicinity.

Statements of opposition to the proposed project, or statements in favor of other alternatives to the project, will be transmitted to the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document, and will be considered by that decision-making body in its determination whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

#### **Comment #7**

“The Housing & Zoning Committee of the Russian Hill Community Association wish [sic] to call to your attention that the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 1645 Pacific Avenue Project does not address the precedent setting nature of the findings.

“There are numerous structures that fit the description of the 1645 project, not only in the surrounding neighborhood, but in the City and County of San Francisco as a whole. The fact that the precedent setting nature of this project and the potential cumulative impact of this project were not thoroughly examined in the DEIR is an omission of the highest order and renders the DEIR inadequate in its present form.

“The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) specifically directs the lead agency to consider:

“... whether the effects of the project are cumulatively considerable. “Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of an individual project are viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects. (CEQA 15064(h)(1); 15065(a)(2); 15065(a)(3).”

“The Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 1645 Pacific Avenue Project does not identify the number of similar structures in the neighborhood let alone the City which could conceivably be impacted by the Planning Department’s recommendations. Bulk, density, scale are concerns of all of the

neighborhoods and the approach that is taken in reviewing this project will be relied on by future developers and neighborhoods.

“The Housing & Zoning Committee strongly urges the Planning Department to address the cumulative impact of the Draft Environmental Impact Report on the neighborhoods throughout the City that have similar structures. Decisions relative to the 1645 Project will have an impact on all of the neighborhoods in the City.” (*Kathleen Courtney, Russian Hill Community Association, written comments*)

“CEQA requires that cumulative impacts of past and future projects be evaluated when studying the environmental impacts of a project in question.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

**Response #7**

In compliance with CEQA, Chapter V, pages 31 to 166 of the DEIR, includes evaluations of cumulative impacts of the proposed project in combination with projects recently approved or under review in the proposed project vicinity, for each environmental impact category. The cumulative analysis in all CEQA impact sections provides analysis for recently approved projects or projects under review, including 1946 Polk Street and 1650 Broadway, and several other small residential projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the Nob Hill area (incorrectly identified in the DEIR as the Russian Hill area—see Response #3).<sup>2</sup> The DEIR concluded that the proposed project would not make a considerable contribution to any cumulative environmental impacts..

The possible effect of the decision to approve, modify, or disapprove the proposed project on other future development proposals does not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions in the DEIR for the proposed project, and therefore requires no response in these responses to comments on the DEIR. The comments will be transmitted to the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document and will be considered by that body prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that for transportation impacts, as noted in the DEIR on pages 83 and 84, the future year 2030 Cumulative traffic volumes were based on projections obtained from the San Francisco County Transportation Authority’s (SFCTA) countywide travel demand forecasting model, rather than from a list-based method that quantifies the number of new vehicle trips based on specific projects that are proposed, approved, or under construction. The specific projects identified in the cumulative sections that are proposed, approved, or under construction in the project neighborhood are accounted for in the SFCTA forecasting model



**Comment #8**

"As a neighbor of the proposed building having lived at 1591 Jackson Street for 19 years, I am very much opposed to the size of this project as the area is already severely congested due to the amount of residential construction that has taken place in this neighborhood. This build-up has brought enough density ... without adding 64,170 more sq. feet to an already crowded area.

"In the mere four square blocks from Pacific to Washington and Larkin to Van Ness mixed use low rise structures have been replaced with significantly larger buildings at the following addresses:

"1536 Pacific - four story building now under construction

"1601 Pacific - five story building

"1625 Pacific - five story building

"1650 Jackson - nine story building

"1701 Jackson - nine story building

"1810-12 Polk Street - five story building

"1702 Washington Street - five story building

"1725 Washington Street - five story building

"1800 Washington Street - ten story building

"In addition yet another large development at 1946 Polk (at Pacific) has been proposed which would replace several commercial structures and a much needed parking lot." (*Barbara Failing, written comments*)

"I wrote to you on October 9, 2008 about the development at 1645 Pacific Avenue. I recently received a public notice about the draft EIR report for the proposed development and thought I would write to you again.

"I am extremely concerned about the proposed project at 1645 Pacific Avenue. I believe that the project is much too large for a neighborhood already congested by a large number of recently-built housing developments.

"My brother bought this condo at Polk and Jackson Streets in late 1988. A few years later, a large eight-story condo building was constructed in the middle of the block between Polk and Van Ness. I moved into this condo in late 1994. Over the past ten years, the following developments have been built within two blocks of my home:

- "• Van Ness between Washington and Jackson (middle of the block). Two tall towers with 100 to 200 condos replaced a two-story motel.
- "• Polk and Pacific (southwest comer). A 5-story apartment building replaced a car repair facility.
- "• Polk between Washington and Jackson (next to our building). A 4-story condo building replaced a 1-story building that had two businesses.
- "• Polk and Pacific (southeast comer). A proposed 5-story, multi-unit condo building will replace two one-story buildings and a parking lot.
- "• Polk and Washington (southwest comer). A 5-story apartment or condo building was constructed several years ago, but I can't remember what was there before.
- "• Pacific between Polk and Larkin (middle of block). A small 3- or 4-story apartment or condo building is being proposed.

“It’s obvious that at least twice the number of people who lived within these four-square blocks live here now, with traffic and noise much more dense and pronounced than before. Please reconsider adding 48 more units to this already densely populated area.” (*Lorri Ungaretti, written comments*)

**Response #8**

As discussed on pages 36 and 37 of the DEIR, the project would intensify use of the project site, but would be compatible with the existing dense character of the Pacific Avenue, Polk Street and Van Ness Avenue corridors in the project vicinity, as well as be compatible with the size, character, and mix of uses that exist in the area. The existing buildings identified in the comments all conform to applicable zoning height and land use densities permitted by the *Planning Code*. The density of development, noise, and traffic generated by the buildings mentioned in the comments is not attributable to the proposed project.

The proposed project would not introduce any incompatible land uses to the vicinity; therefore, the project would not make a substantial contribution to cumulative land use impacts. As discussed on pages 63 to 93 of the DEIR, additional traffic and activity generated by the proposed project would not result in significant project-specific or cumulative impacts on transportation and circulation, or noise.

As statements of opposition to the proposed project, or as statements in favor of other values, the comments will be transmitted to the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document, and will be considered by that body prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

**Comment #9**

“Elimination of Neighborhood-serving Commercial Space. The DEIR states on page 48: ‘The demolition of the approximately 27,275 sq. ft. of automotive service space on the site would result in the displacement of approximately nine existing employees ... This loss would be offset by the proposed retail space, which would accommodate approximately ten new employees ...’

“The Polk NCD is a mixed-use neighborhood that includes a variety of commercial spaces in addition to housing and retail. The disappearance of these spaces and uses is increasing as the development of speculative housing projects displaces them. The proposed project demolishes 27,275 sq feet of high bay commercial space and pushes out the service businesses that occupy them along with the nine jobs. Although the DEIR states that the retail space the new development includes, will replace the jobs, the service uses will leave the neighborhood forever and most likely seek more economic space outside the city. This will reduce the diversity of businesses in this historically mixed-use neighborhood. The cumulative impact of this development trend of replacing neighborhood commercial with speculative housing will be the homogenization of our neighborhood and the reduction of neighborhood services.

We suggest that this is a highly undesirable outcome especially in light of the increasingly high vacancy rate in residential properties in the city. The impact of job reduction should be highlighted as a negative impact, given that no new businesses are being planned or proposed—merely space for possible accommodation of unknown retail.

“The mix of commercial/service uses in the Polk NCD is a distinctive and desirable feature of the neighborhood character. Historically the service garages and similar businesses are in support of the automobile showrooms in the Van Ness district. The high bay space also provides the kind of space necessary for builder’s suppliers and similar businesses. These spaces are the urban and sensitive versions of the big box suburban stores. We suggest that the DEIR evaluate the need for both the uses and type of space these high bay spaces provide and the cumulative negative impact of their demolition on the neighborhood’s diversity and services available in the city.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

### **Response #9**

The comment describes a “development trend of replacing neighborhood commercial with speculative housing.” As noted in the comment, the DEIR states that the proposed project’s estimated nine retail positions would offset the loss of eight service workers. The retail spaces proposed in the project design are designed to be consistent with the controls of the Polk Street NCD; that is their design is intended to encourage neighborhood commercial uses.

Whether or not there is a trend away from auto-service uses toward residential and retail uses in the neighborhood, the EIR states on page 34 “The project’s proposed residential and retail uses are principal permitted uses in the Polk NCD.” The EIR also states on page 36 “the proposed project would not introduce new land uses to the project vicinity,” and would not “substantially and adversely alter the land use character of the vicinity.” Furthermore, on page 37, the EIR states that the proposed project, in combination with other proposed or recently approved projects in the area “would not make a significant contribution to cumulative land use impacts in the project vicinity or the City as a whole.”

The comment is correct that “no new businesses are being planned or proposed—merely space for possible accommodation of unknown retail.” However, the displacement of existing auto-service uses and the potential future replacement with retail and residential uses would be a socioeconomic effect of the proposed project, and as noted in Response #6, *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15131(a) states that socioeconomic effects of a project “shall not be treated as significant effects on the environment.”

This comment does not identify how these socioeconomic changes would result in an impact considered significant under CEQA. Comments in favor of, or in opposition to, the proposed

project will be transmitted to, and considered by, the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document and will be considered by that body prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

**Comment #10**

“Appropriate Commercial Space. The Polk Street NCD supports small and locally owned businesses. Typically, smaller commercial space is compatible with small businesses and neighbors urge that this type of commercial space be provided on the project site. At the urging of Planning, the developer has added commercial space that continues the history of this commercial street; however, it’s pertinent that the size be appropriate for this corridor as well. Too often, neighbors see large, inadequate commercial space stay vacant for years.” *(Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments)*

**Response #10**

The comment concerns the size of commercial space in the proposed project and vicinity, which does not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions. The appropriate size of commercial space of the proposed project was not evaluated in the EIR.

**Comment #11**

“10) Neighborhood Serving Auto Facilities

“No study was made of the cumulative effects of the loss of neighborhood auto serving facilities. When the last gas station and repair facility is gone from the neighborhood/city—what will that mean? Will it be studied then? Until cars no longer exist these type of facilities need [to be] preserved at all costs.” *(Mark Whisler, written comments)*

**Response #11**

The comment concerns the availability of auto-serving facilities in the proposed project vicinity and in San Francisco, which does not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions. The effect of the proposed project on the availability of auto serving facilities was not evaluated in the EIR.

## Neighborhood Character

### Comment #12

“Land Use Character. The DEIR states that the project would ‘be compatible with the existing dense character of Pacific Avenue, Polk Street, and Van Ness Avenue corridors in the project vicinity, as well as be compatible with the size, character, and mix of uses that exist in the area ... Therefore the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse impact on the prevalent land use character of the vicinity.’ (DEIR page 36) However, the project is not part of the Van Ness corridor nor is it compatible with the scale and character of Pacific Avenue. Pacific Avenue is a small-scale street composed of one or two stories buildings. Only two buildings are 5 stories and none are higher than that. The proposed development would be 65 feet to the roof with 3’-9” parapets and 16-foot high penthouses. At this height, it significantly exceeds the height of all of the buildings on Pacific Avenue from Van Ness in the Polk Street NCD and the Pacific Avenue NCD.

“The DEIR repeatedly improperly references the project approved at 1946 Polk Street (Pacific Terrace). The report erroneously states that the height of the 1946 Polk Street building was approved at 6 floors, rather than 5 floors with a significant 12 foot set back on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. In addition 1946 Polk Street is substantially smaller building of 38 units whereas 1645 Pacific Avenue proposes 49 units. The consistent cites and comparison to [1946] Polk Street [are] entirely incorrect and misleading.

“The DEIR also referenced approved project at 1650 Broadway. This project is neither nearby nor is it in the Polk Street neighborhood. This project is located on the other side of Van Ness and Broadway and is in Pacific Heights. Referencing this project is also misleading.

“The DEIR makes frequent references to the Van Ness corridor and nearby buildings in the Van Ness corridor. This is misleading because the Van Ness corridor is a high-rise spine running along a 100-foot wide street supporting highway 101. As such, the zoning regulations permit greater heights, densities, and bulk. The specific buildings cited as examples for scale, 1650 Jackson and the Medical Arts Building, are both in the Van Ness corridor and are not adequate examples for the Polk and Pacific neighborhoods.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“A false reference was made several times about an approved 6 story project at 1946 Polk Street (SE corner). That project was approved for 4 stories and a 12’ setback for a 5th. Also, citing a 7 story building located on Broadway in Pacific Heights has no relevance either. (*Bill and Diane Carroll, written comments*)

“The DEIR also firmly states that [1946] Polk Street is a six-story building. It is not. This project was approved as a five-story building with significant 12-foot setbacks on the fifth floor.

“Additionally, it cites 1650 Broadway as a comparable development, but that is outside of the Polk Street NCD and [in] its own distinguished neighborhood.” (*Diane Carol, oral comments*)

“My name is John Faust. I live at 1650 Jackson Street. I’m part of the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association. I would like to comment a little bit about Section 5 of the DEIR, the section entitled, ‘Environmental Setting and Impacts.’

“So first off I want to start off more specifically on Section 5A, the Land Use Character Impact Analysis, which begins on page 36. The document states that although the project would intensify the use of the project site, it would be compatible with the existing dense characters of Pacific Avenue, Polk Street, and

Van Ness corridor in the project vicinity as well as compatible with the size, character, and mixed uses that exist in the area.

“While I think it is a fair statement to say that about the Van Ness corridor, I don’t think it is when you are talking about either Pacific Avenue or the Polk Street corridor. We heard some comments from Mr. Canada and also from Pat about mass bulk and height in the area. They commented on the fact that this project would be one of the few six-story buildings in the neighborhood. So, to say that is compatible with both Polk Street and Pacific Avenue corridors, I don’t think is factual. Although, it could be when talking about Van Ness.” (*Jon Faust, Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

**Response #12**

Some of the comments here note that the DEIR evaluates the proposed project within the context of the buildings located along the Van Ness corridor, which permits greater heights than the Polk Street NCD and the Pacific Avenue NCD. The DEIR also evaluates the proposed project in the context of buildings located in the Pacific Avenue NCD, as well as buildings located in the Polk Street NCD, which also permits greater heights than the Pacific Avenue NCD.

When discussing land use and neighborhood character, rather than compliance with zoning district controls, it is appropriate to evaluate the proposed project in the context of all buildings in its immediate vicinity. Because Van Ness Avenue is located less than half a block from the project site, it is appropriate to include Van Ness Avenue, along with Pacific Avenue and Polk Street, as part of the project vicinity.

On the project block there is a seven-story building at the northeast corner of Van Ness Avenue at Jackson Street (the Medical Arts Building at 2000 Van Ness Avenue), the adjacent nine-story building at 1650 Jackson Street (which is immediately south of the project site), a five-story apartment building (1625 Pacific Avenue) adjacent to the site’s eastern boundary, and the five-story mixed-use building on the southwest corner of Pacific Avenue at Polk Street (1601 Pacific Avenue). Within two blocks of the project block and within a block of Van Ness Avenue there are the following buildings five stories or more in height: a nine-story mixed-use building at the southeast corner of Van Ness Avenue at Jackson Street, an eleven-story apartment building (Jackson Tower) at the southeast corner of Jackson Street at Franklin Street, an eight-story apartment building at the northeast corner of Jackson Street at Franklin Street, a twelve-story apartment building at the northwest corner of Pacific Avenue at Franklin Street (1802 Pacific Avenue), a five-story apartment building at 2226 Franklin Street (one-half block north of Pacific Avenue), a mid-block five-story building one-half block west of Van Ness Avenue (1760 Pacific Avenue), a seven-story apartment building across the street from this building (1745 Pacific

Avenue), a nine-story mixed-use building at the northwest corner of Van Ness Avenue at Washington Street, and a four- to five-story mixed use building at the northwest corner of Van Ness Avenue at Pacific Avenue. This list does not include the numerous buildings four stories or less located within the same radius.

The DEIR identifies the heights of all buildings in the immediate vicinity of the project, and incorrectly states that building heights vary from one to nine stories within a two-block vicinity of the project. As discussed above, there are eleven- and twelve-story buildings within a two-block radius at the project site. The following changes are made to the DEIR:

Page 8, third paragraph, second sentence is changed as follows:

There are various building types, sizes, and ages, with building heights ranging from one to ~~nine~~ twelve stories within a two-block vicinity of the project.

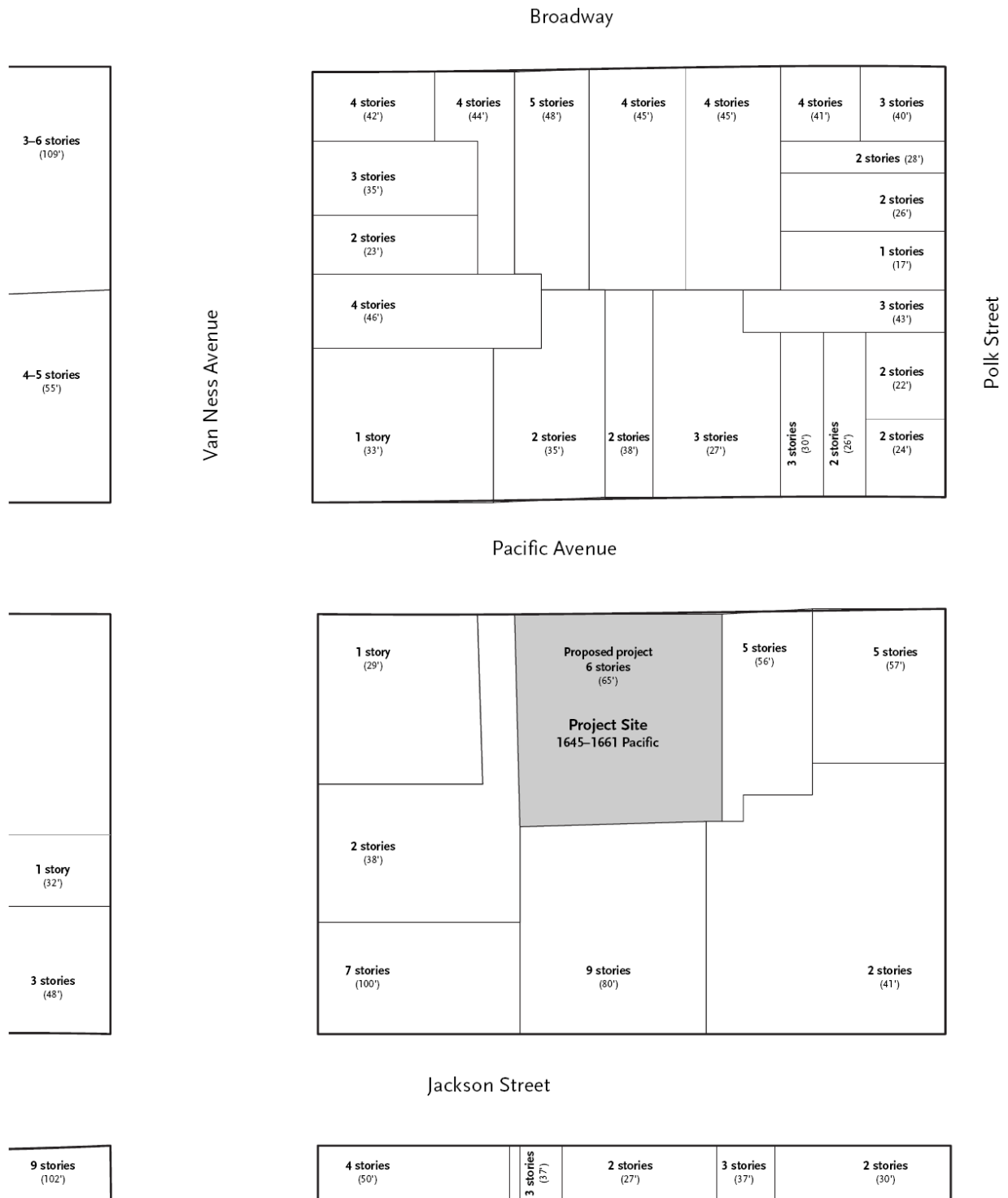
Page 32, first paragraph, second sentence is changed as follows:

Buildings of various types, sizes, and ages exist in the project vicinity, and building heights vary from one to ~~nine~~ twelve stories within a two-block vicinity of the project.

Figures C&R.1A and 1B, pages 24 and 25, identify the heights and number of stories of buildings within an approximately one to one and one-half block radius of the project site. Within this radius, building heights vary from one to nine stories.

As discussed on pages 40 and 44 of the DEIR, "The proposed project's 65-foot-tall, six-story building would be taller than most buildings in the immediate vicinity, but similar in height to the five-story 1625 Pacific Avenue building adjacent to the project site to the east, and the five-story 1601 Pacific Avenue building immediately east of the 1625 Pacific Avenue building. The proposed building would be shorter than the nine-story residential building (1650 Jackson Street) and seven-story Medical Arts Building (2000 Van Ness Avenue), located to the south and southwest of the project site within the project block, respectively." As discussed on pages 36 and 37 of the DEIR, the project would intensify use of the project site, but would be compatible with the existing dense character of the Pacific Avenue, Polk Street, and Van Ness Avenue corridors in the project vicinity, as well as be compatible with the size, character, and mix of uses that exist in the area.

Regarding the reference on DEIR page 32 to the recently approved building at 1932-1946 Polk Street, it was consistent with the project evaluated in the *1946 Polk Street Mitigated Negative*



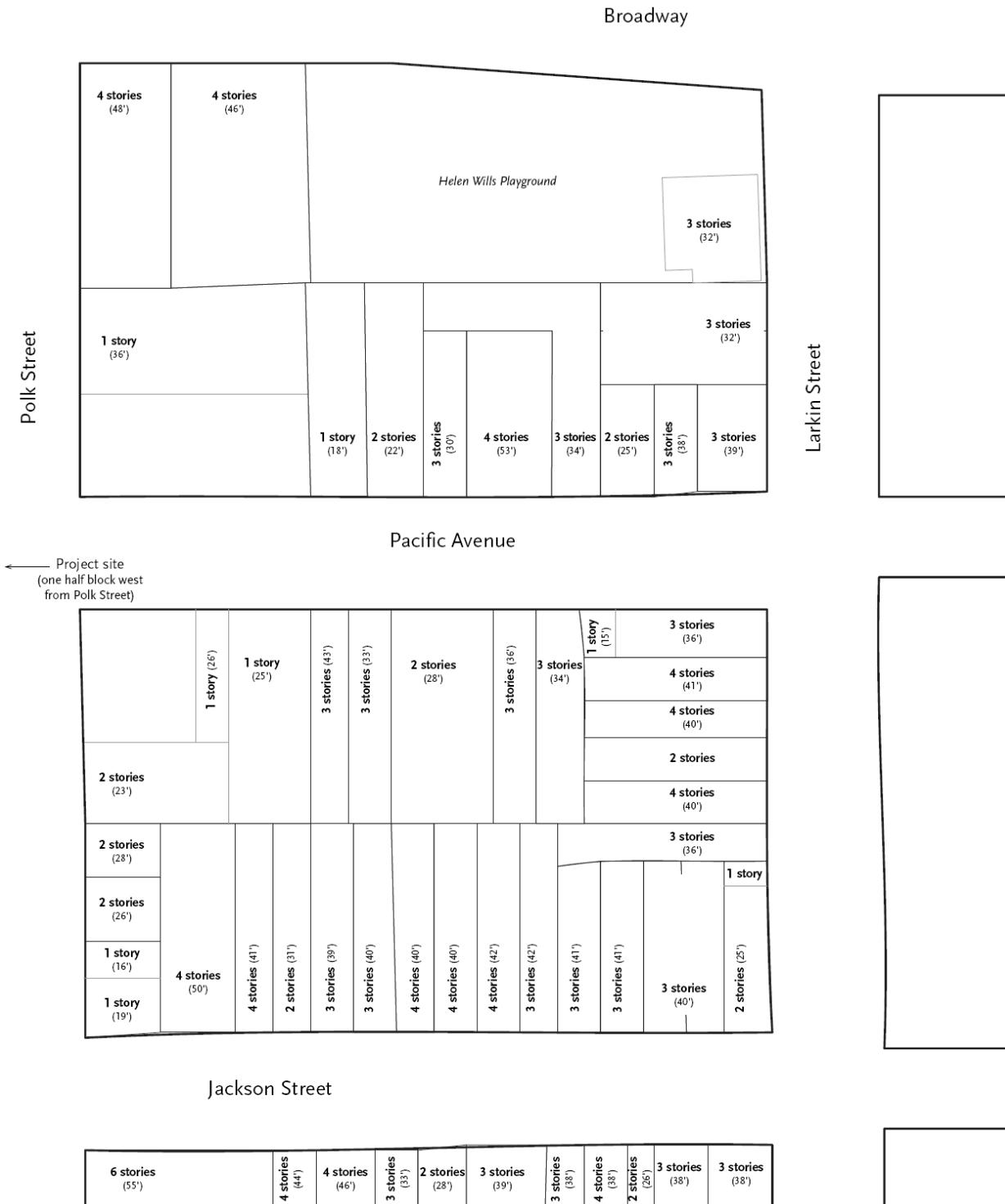
PLEASE NOTE: Building heights given are approximate and are given from street level to the roofline. They are calculated based on data from the Sanborn Database cross-referenced with data from the San Francisco Department of Public Works streetmaps. Margin of error ± 3 feet.

Source: During Associates

8-30-10

Figure C&R 1A Heights and Number of Stories of Neighborhood Buildings





PLEASE NOTE: Building heights given are approximate and are given from street level to the roofline. They are calculated based on data from the Sanborn Database cross-referenced with data from the San Francisco Department of Public Works streetmaps. Margin of error ± 3 feet.

Source: During Associates

9-2-10

**Figure C&R 1B Heights and Number of Stories of Neighborhood Buildings**

*Declaration* (File No. 2006.0826E) published by the City on August 3, 2008 and amended on September 24, 2008. At the time the DEIR was prepared, a six-story building was proposed at 1946 Polk Street, and is described as six stories in a height in multiple locations in the DEIR. After the DEIR was prepared, the proposed six-story building was reduced in size to five stories with a 12-foot setback on the top floor, as mentioned in the comment. Thus, the DEIR accurately describes the building that was proposed at 1946 Polk Street at the time the DEIR was prepared. The reduction in size of the 1946 Polk Street building does not substantially alter the anticipated character and heights in the project vicinity, or conclusion of the DEIR that the project would be compatible with the existing dense character of the Pacific Avenue, Polk Street, and Van Ness Avenue corridors in the project vicinity, nor does it alter the conclusions of the DEIR regarding wind, shadow, and visual effects discussed above.

The approved project at 1650 Broadway is included in the analysis of cumulative impacts, along with other recently approved projects that are closer to the project site, as is necessary and appropriate in evaluating cumulative impacts.

The references to the final approved height of the building are updated in the DEIR as follows:

Page 32, second paragraph, third sentence is changed as follows:

A ~~five-six~~-story, 38-unit residential building was recently approved for the property currently occupied by a one- to two-story retail building and surface parking area at 1932-1946 Polk Street and 1567-1575 Pacific Avenue, respectively, on the southeast corner of Pacific Avenue and Polk Street, one-half block east of the project site.

Page 36, first paragraph, second sentence is changed as follows:

In the project vicinity, a ~~five-six~~-story building with 38 residential units and 2,900 sq.ft. of retail space was recently approved at the southeast corner of Pacific Avenue and Polk Street (1946 Polk Street), a seven-story building with 34 residential units was recently approved on the north side of Broadway between Van Ness Avenue and Franklin Street (1650 Broadway), and several other small residential projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the Russian Hill area have also been approved or are currently under review.

The approved project at 1650 Broadway is included in the analysis of cumulative impacts, along with other recently approved projects that are closer to the project site, as is necessary and appropriate in the evaluation of cumulative impacts in compliance with CEQA.

**Comment #13**

“Commissioner [Courtney] Damkroger (absent, sent comments via email):

- “• I appreciate the effort to use elements of the potential district in the new building. However, the proposed building is massive and its scale feels out of character with the existing neighborhood, though the two residential buildings to the east are five or more stories.” (*Historic Preservation Commission, hearing minutes*)

**Response #13**

As noted in the previous response (Response #12), the project would intensify use of the project site, but would be compatible with the existing dense character of the Pacific Avenue, Polk Street, and Van Ness Avenue corridors in the project vicinity, as well as be compatible with the size, character, and mix of uses that exist in the area.

As discussed on pages 36 and 37 of the DEIR, the project would intensify use of the project site, but would be compatible with the existing dense character of the Pacific Avenue, Polk Street, and Van Ness Avenue corridors in the project vicinity, as well as be compatible with the size, character, and mix of uses that exist in the area. The project would not make a substantial contribution to cumulative land use impacts.

The comments will be transmitted to the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document and will be considered by that body prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

Also see Response #21 regarding the project’s relationship to the proposed Historic “Auto Row” District along the Van Ness Avenue corridor.

## AESTHETICS

### Height

#### Comment #14

“In the project vicinity, numerous references are made about a 9 story building, inferring that a 6 story building would blend right in. That 9 story building is in the 85’ zone, is on a different street and was built with no exceptions.” (*Bill and Diane Carroll, written comments*)

#### Response #14

The height and other zoning regulations applicable to the project are addressed in DEIR Section V.A, Land Use and Use Planning, pages 32 to 37. The project would comply with the 65-foot height limit applicable to the project site. Conditional Use Authorizations for an exception to the bulk requirements are allowed under *Planning Code* Section 303.

The discussion of neighboring building heights is appropriate and relevant to the existing visual context in which the proposed project would be developed. While the nearby 9-story building may be in a different height district, the building is adjacent to the project site to the south, and comprises critical information to the evaluation of the project’s visual impacts on the existing built environment. The project would be located on a block bounded by Pacific Avenue, Van Ness, Jackson, and Polk Streets that includes buildings between five and nine stories that are similar in massing and scale.

#### Comment #15

“My name is Frank Cannata. I am also with the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association. I live at 1561 Sacramento Street. The site of this proposed project is an area I go by every day of my life in San Francisco.

“Pat just talked about bulk. I want to talk about height. It is our belief that the DEIR is misleading and inadequate in describing this proposed project and the character of the neighborhood in regards to height.

“Some of these inadequacies are on page 32 and 37. There are references to six-story building approved for the southeast corner of Polk and Pacific, which is 1932 to 46 Polk and 1667 to 1675 Pacific. This Commission approved that building sometime earlier this year, and the approval was for a five-story building with significant setbacks, 12-foot setbacks on both Polk and Pacific.

“On page 36, the DEIR states the proposed building is compatible in size of the buildings that exist in the area. This is not true. It will be one of the few six-story buildings in Polk NCD with all other ones of six or more stories being corner buildings.

“Page 37 references an approved seven-story building on Broadway between Van Ness and Franklin. This was a totally misleading reference because the proposed building is not in the Polk Street NCD and it is west of Van Ness where taller buildings are generally more accepted.

“Page 40 compares the proposed six-story building to existing five-story buildings as being similar in height. Now, one floor compared to a five-story building is 20 percent increase. To me, that is not comparable in height.

“The proposed building would be the tallest building on Pacific Avenue from Van Ness to Polk. This is a middle-of-the-block building where the corner buildings on Polk and Pacific are one five-story and one, I believe, two-story building.

“Buildings in Polk Street NCD from California to Union, so that is five blocks on either side approximately, generally range from two to four stories. It’s about 80 percent of the buildings with some five-story buildings and a few six and taller buildings, but all the buildings that are six stories or taller are all corner buildings.

“For these reasons, we believe the DEIR is totally inadequate in its representation of how this building compares height wise to our neighborhood.” (*Frank Cannata, Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

“On page 45, a justified rational[e] claims to ... ‘provide a visual transition between the large scale buildings along the Van Ness corridor to the west ... ’ What large scale buildings, the one story Harris Steak House on the NE corner of Van Ness/Pacific and the other one story restaurant on the SE corner of Van Ness/Pacific?” (*Bill and Diane Carroll, written comments*)

### **Response #15**

As noted in Response #12, the description of the approved residential project at 1932-1946 Polk Street has been revised.

The DEIR states on page 36 that the building would be compatible in size with the other taller buildings in the area, and specifies the Pacific Avenue, Polk Street, and Van Ness Avenue corridors; it does not limit the comparison to buildings within the Polk NCD. As set forth in more detail above in Response #12, buildings range in height from one to twelve stories in a two-block radius. There are 14 buildings five stories or taller within two blocks of the project site, including seven buildings seven stories or taller, and numerous four-story buildings. To characterize a six-story building as compatible in size with seven taller buildings and seven others one story shorter is an accurate statement. The height of the proposed building would fit within the range of heights of the taller buildings within a two-block radius. The statement on DEIR page 37 pertains to existing and planned development near the proposed project. The referenced building

on Broadway would be located less than two blocks from the proposed project, and it is relevant to the discussion of comparable development in the project vicinity.

Given the context of existing buildings ranging from one to twelve stories located within two blocks of the project, a six-story building would be comparable in height to neighboring five-story buildings. The proposed building would be the tallest building on Pacific Avenue in the one block from Van Ness to Polk. In the block bounded by Pacific Avenue on the north, Van Ness Avenue on the west, Jackson Street on the south, and Polk Street on the east, however, there are seven- and nine-story buildings on the block. See Response #12, above, for additional details.

As noted above, the discussion in the DEIR is not limited to the Polk Street NCD, but encompasses development within approximately two blocks of the project. The proposed project would be consistent with the zoning regulations of the Polk Street NCD.

## Bulk

### Comment #16

“Zoning, Height and Bulk – Neighborhood Character. The DEIR minimizes the impact of bulk on the character of the Polk NCD. First, the report misrepresents the character of the neighborhood and Pacific Avenue by over-emphasizing the characteristics of the Van Ness Corridor resulting in a non-objective and inaccurate evaluation.

“The DEIR states ‘the proposed project would not be expected to cause substantial and demonstrable negative change, or disrupt the existing visual character of the project vicinity.’ Yet, compared to Pacific Avenue, the building height, size, and bulk are overwhelming. The bulk and length exception the project is seeking will result in a domineering building. The project would not even meet the Van Ness zoning guidelines. Van Ness, often referred to in the report as justification, is a 100-foot wide street where the buildings are meant to enclose the street space.

“The bulk guidelines are in place to avoid the construction of projects of overwhelming scale. To quote (San Francisco General Plan policies 3.6,3.7, and 3.8) ‘to help reduce the negative effects of development on large sites.’ The DEIR analysis is limited to the discussion of height, not taking bulk into consideration, misrepresenting the actual impact of the project on neighborhood character. A more thorough analysis, including consideration of the bulk impact, is necessary and should be required for a more accurate representation of how this project will affect the neighborhood.

“San Francisco neighborhoods are experienced street by street. We encourage you to evaluate the proposed 1645 Pacific project in the context of Pacific Avenue. In the context of Pacific this project is overwhelming and dominating. The following photos [see attachment to letter in Appendix 1 of this document] clearly illustrate the visual impact this project will have on the street. The first is of the north side of Pacific Avenue, the second is of the south side of Pacific Avenue.

“The project is asking for a variance on both the length and bulk of the building. We suggest that this will result in increasing the negative aesthetic impact this project will have to the character of the neighborhood.

“For a building with a footprint this large, a lower structure would mitigate the impacts of the development to the neighborhood character.

“Cumulative impacts of out of scale projects in the Polk Street NCD. It is the practice of developers of large sites to ask for bulk exceptions. These overly large projects compound their effects on the neighborhood character—especially in the Polk Street area where several large developments are currently being proposed. We suggest that the DEIR has overlooked the delicate balance of the Polk NCD and has not accurately portrayed the cumulative impact these projects have on the fragile character of this area. .” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“My name is Pat Sonnino. I live at 1650 Jackson Street. I would like to comment specifically on the DEIR analysis of the visual character, specifically bulk. The DEIR minimizes the impact of bulk on the character on the Polk Street neighborhood.

“First the report misrepresents the character of the neighborhood and Pacific Avenue by over emphasizing the characteristics of the Van Ness corridor resulting in a non-objective and inaccurate evaluation.

“The DEIR states the proposed project will not be expected to cause substantial and demonstrable negative change or disrupt the existing visual character of the project vicinity. Yet compared to Pacific Avenue, the building height, size, and bulk are overwhelming. The bulk and length exception the project is seeking of will result in a domineering building. The project would not even meet the Van Ness corridor guidelines for bulk, and Van Ness is often referred to in the report as a justification, but this is a 100-foot wide street where the buildings are meant to enclose the space.

“The bulk guidelines are in place to avoid the construction of projects of overwhelming scale to, quote, help reduce the negative effects of development on large sites.

“The DEIR analysis is limited to the discussion of height, not taking bulk into consideration, misrepresenting the actual impact. Neighborhoods are experienced street by street. We encourage you to evaluate the proposed 1645 Pacific project in the context of Pacific Avenue.

“It is a practice of developers of large sites to ask for bulk exceptions. These overly large projects compound their effects on the neighborhood character. I suggest that the DEIR has overlooked the delicate balance of the Polk Street neighborhood and has not accurately portrayed the cumulative impact of these large projects on the fragile character of this area.” (*Pat Sonnino, oral comments*)

“Granting bulk exceptions would have a huge impact on the neighborhood, none of them good. The block 1645 Pacific is located on is all 2 story buildings with two 50' apartment buildings next door and east of the project.” (*Bill and Diane Carroll, written comments*)

“We support the comment and conclusion they made [to] the NOP by the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association that stated:

“Bulk Exception: We are concerned with the exceptional bulk of 1645 Pacific and its adverse impact on the historic Polk Street neighborhood and the recently down-zoned Pacific Avenue Neighborhood. The overbearing scale, because of the project’s excessive height and bulk will

dominate the existing small scale and grain of Pacific Avenue, and will result in a negative impact on the character of our neighborhood.'

“The developer is asking for a special exception for bulk to the Planning Code. The developer is asking for a 28% extension of the diagonal (160 feet instead of 125 feet allowable). This increase in dimension will compound the bulk and excessively increase the mass of an already enormous mid-rise on a small-scale street. No matter how tastefully designed, this building will be out of character with Pacific Avenue and the prevailing character of the Polk Street and Pacific Avenue Neighborhoods.

“Section 271 of the San Francisco Code: Bulk Limits clearly states that “... There may be some exceptional cases in which these limits may properly be permitted to be exceeded to a certain degree; however, following public review and exploration of alternatives, provided there are adequate compensating/actors. Such deviation might occur, when the criteria of this section are met, for one of the following reasons:

“1) Achievement of a distinctively better design, in both a public and private sense, than would be possible with strict adherence to the bulk limits, avoiding an unnecessary prescription of building form while carrying out the intent of the bulk limits and the principles and policies of the Master Plan.

“2) Development of a building or structure with widespread public service benefits and significance to the community at large, when compelling functional requirements of the specific building or structure make necessary such a deviation.”

“There were no public reviews, scoping sessions, or development of alternatives nor are there compensation factors regarding the request for this exemption. There are no immediate public service benefits provided by the developer to the community at large or small. The builder is, on the contrary, electing to remove public services such as merchant parking and a service business. The developer is providing no housing units that reflect the demographics of the neighborhood and the developer is exporting the required moderate income apartments to the Mayor’s in-lieu fee, which has a seven year percolation period and yields no contribution to the neighborhood community.’

“We do not find that the DEIR has provided support for the granting of the Bulk Limits entitlement.”  
(Mark Whisler, written comments)

### **Response #16**

On page 35 of the DEIR, it is noted that the project site is located in the 65-A Height and Bulk District, which requires that projects comply with the 65-foot height limit and that buildings have a maximum length of 110 feet and a maximum diagonal dimension of 125 feet above 40 feet in height.

The project sponsor’s first design submittal to the Planning Department (shown in Figure C&R.2, on the following page) complied with the A Bulk District’s maximum building length and diagonal dimensions and was a six-story, 65-foot-tall structure. The figure illustrates the proportions of a potential bulk-complying project. In response to comments from neighbors and



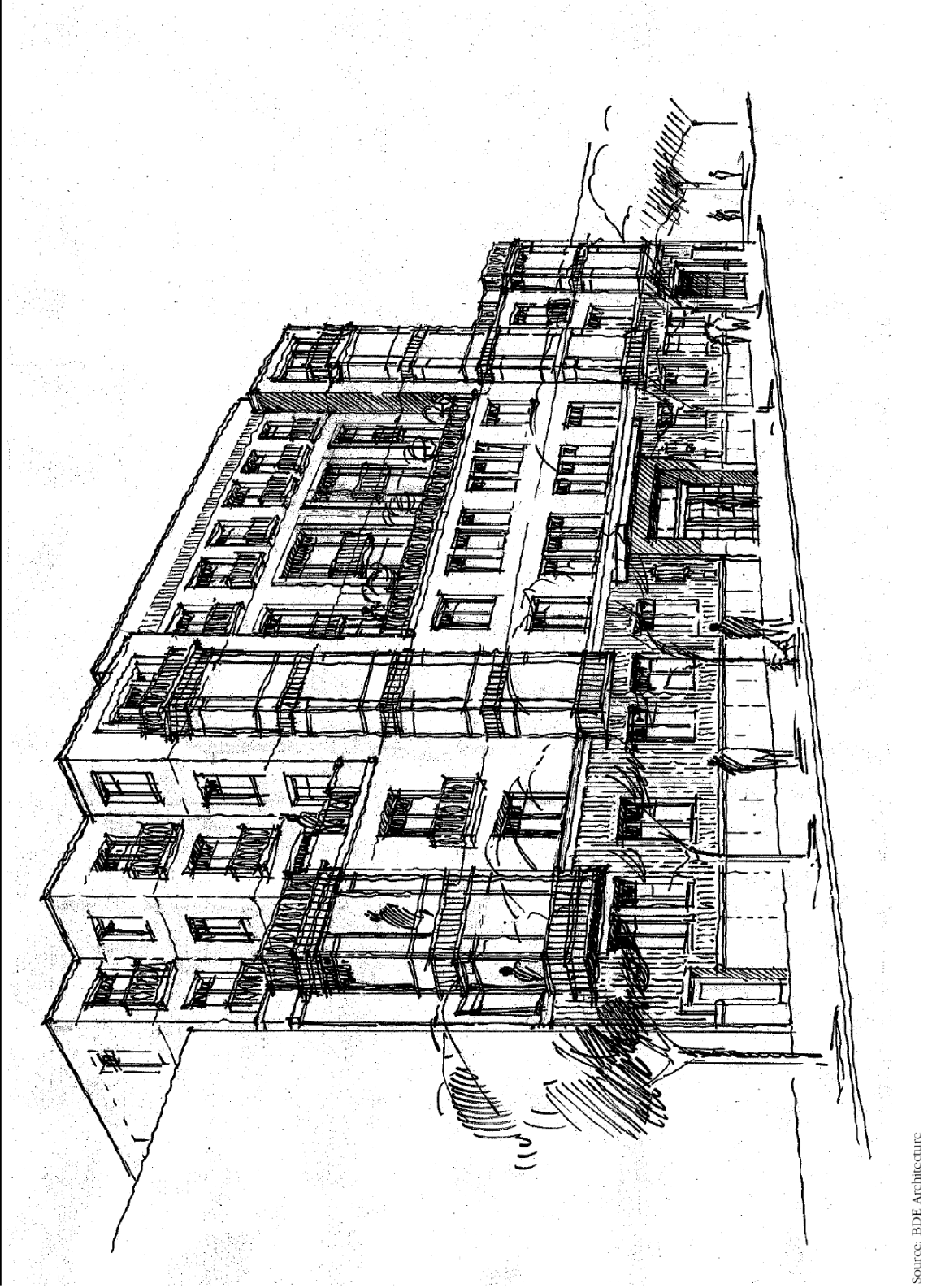


Figure C&R 2 Original Proposed Project

Source: BDE Architecture  
9/2/10

the Planning Department, the project was revised as shown in Figures 4 to 14, pages 14 to 24 in the DEIR. Figure C&R.3, page 34, shows a perspective of the currently proposed project.

In response to the desire to retain the front of the 1661 Pacific building, the massing of the structure was changed from the symmetrical design shown in Figure C&R 2 that meets the "A" bulk regulations to one that has more horizontal articulation. The proposed project would have a maximum linear dimension of 124 feet and a maximum diagonal dimension of 158 feet above 40 feet, which would exceed the bulk limits by 14 feet for the maximum length and by 33 feet for the diagonal dimension. The project sponsor would request approval by the Planning Commission of a CU for an exception from the bulk requirements, pursuant to *Planning Code* Section 271. The criteria for bulk exception include the following:

"The appearance of bulk in the building, structure or development shall be reduced by means of at least one and preferably a combination of the following factors, so as to produce the impression of an aggregate of parts rather than a single building mass:

- "• Major variations in the planes of wall surfaces, in either depth or direction, that significantly alter the mass;
- "• Significant differences in the heights of various portions of the building, structure or development that divide the mass into distinct elements;
- "• Differences in materials, colors or scales of the facades that produce separate major elements;
- "• Compensation for those portions of the building, structure or development that may exceed the bulk limits by corresponding reduction of other portions below the maximum bulk permitted; and In cases where two or more buildings, structures or towers are contained within a single development, a wide separation between such buildings, structures or towers.

"In every case the building, structure or development shall be made compatible with the character and development of the surrounding area by means of all of the following factors:

- "• A silhouette harmonious with natural land-forms and building patterns, including the patterns produced by height limits;
- "• Either maintenance of an overall height similar to that of surrounding development or a sensitive transition, where appropriate, to development of a dissimilar character;
- "• Use of materials, colors and scales either similar to or harmonizing with those of nearby development; and
- "• Preservation or enhancement of the pedestrian environment by maintenance of pleasant scale and visual interest.

"While the above factors must be present to a considerable degree for any bulk limit to be exceeded, these factors must be present to a greater degree where both the maximum length



Source: BDE Architecture

7-12-10

Figure C&R 3 Current Proposed Project

and the maximum diagonal dimension are to be exceeded than where only one maximum dimension is to be exceeded.”

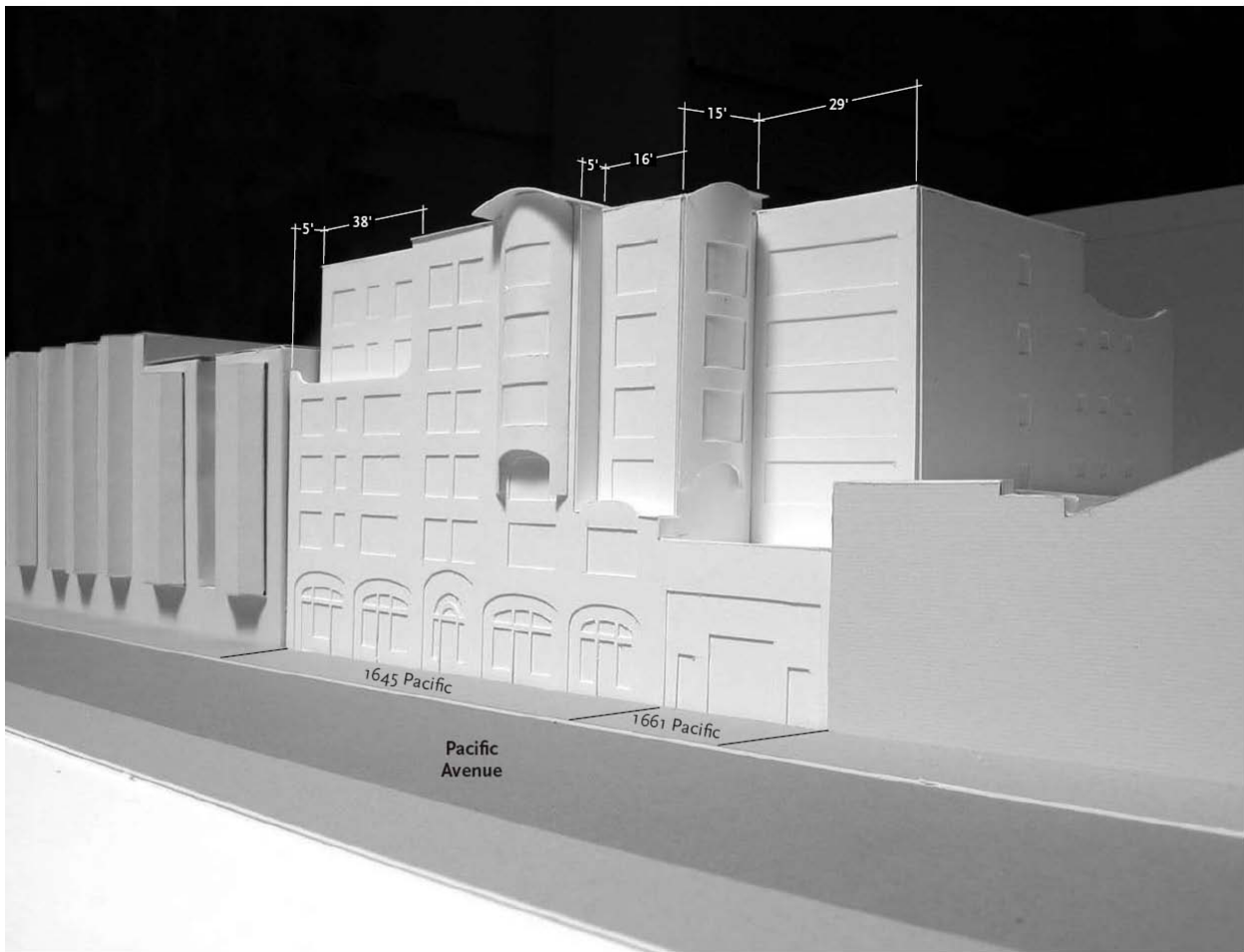
The existing nine-story building in the project block, located immediately to the south of the project (1650 Jackson Street), has a maximum linear dimension of about 115 feet and a diagonal dimension of approximately 135 feet, while the adjoining seven-story building (2000 Van Ness Avenue) has a maximum linear dimension of about 122 feet and a diagonal dimension of approximately 137 feet. The building just east of the nine-story 1650 Jackson Street (1900 Polk Street) has maximum linear dimension and diagonal dimensions of approximately 163 feet and 218 feet, respectively; however, the building is only two stories (approximately 41 feet) tall. These dimensions compare with the proposed project, which would have a maximum linear dimension of 124 feet and a maximum diagonal dimension of 158 feet. Although the linear dimension of the project would be 2 to 9 feet greater than the first two among these other buildings on the block, and the maximum diagonal dimension would be up to 23 feet longer, these neighboring buildings are both taller than the proposed project, and provide no setbacks.

The two five-story buildings located immediately to the east of the proposed project are both built to the front property line and are roughly the same height so that they could be considered as a single mass. In this respect, the maximum linear dimension of the combined buildings is about 138 feet and the maximum diagonal dimension is approximately 166 feet. The mass of these two buildings together would be greater than the mass dimensions of the proposed project and do not have the upper-story setbacks proposed by the project.

Figure C&R 4, page 37, is a contextual model showing the proposed project set-backs and the adjacent buildings. At the second floors and higher, the proposed building’s northwest corner would be set back 15 feet from Pacific Avenue and set back 29 feet from the side property line.

There would be an approximately five-foot setback about 16 feet wide on the second floor on Pacific Avenue that would extend to the remaining upper floors of the building. There would be fifth- and sixth-floor setbacks at the building’s northeast corner about five feet from the Pacific Avenue property line and approximately 38 feet from the eastern property line.

The proposed 124-foot width of the project at the project’s sidewalk frontage—which is where the impact of the project’s bulk would be experienced most directly (whether from in front of the building, from the opposite sidewalk, or obliquely from down the street)—would be shorter than



Note: This model shows a setback at the rear of the building that is not part of the current design.

Source: BDE Architecture

9-3-10

**Figure C&R 4 Model of Project Showing Setbacks on Pacific Avenue**

the combined frontage (approximately 138 feet) of the two side-by-side five-story buildings located immediately east of the project.

According to the project sponsor and architect, the massing of the proposed building at 1645 Pacific Avenue would be modulated through articulation created by setbacks, bays and recessed windows, a varied roofline, and a simple modillion cornice, with more detailed ground-floor treatment featuring full-height arched windows and other architectural elements. As experienced at the pedestrian level (i.e., from sidewalks on both sides of the street), the building's massing would be further diminished by a rusticated base with arched storefront openings, an ornate entrance, and punched window openings with divided light windows.

The Planning Commission would determine the findings required by *Planning Code* Section 271 when making the decision to approve or disapprove the proposed project. In accordance with Sections 15087 and 15105 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, a 45-day public review of the DEIR was provided by the City. A public hearing on the DEIR was conducted by the City on December 10, 2009. Prior to that, the City published and distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on October 1, 2008, announcing its intention to prepare an EIR and soliciting public input on the scope of the EIR.

CEQA only requires a lead agency to conduct a public scoping meeting for "projects of statewide, regional or areawide significance pursuant to Section 15206" (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15082(c)(1)). The criteria for projects of statewide, regional or area wide significance defined in Section 15206 of the *CEQA Guidelines* include residential developments of more than 500 dwelling units. With 48 dwelling units, the project falls far short of the threshold requiring a public scoping meeting. The public was provided an opportunity to provide input into the scope of the EIR via the NOP and a 30-day review period for the NOP.

CEQA requires an EIR to evaluate alternatives that would avoid or substantially reduce one or more significant environmental effects of the proposed project (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6). The DEIR does not identify any significant environmental impacts associated with the project's bulk. Nonetheless, Alternative B: Preservation Alternative is an alternative with less bulk than the proposed project above the ground floor.

CEQA does not require or permit exaction of mitigation requirements (including monetary compensation) for less-than-significant impacts. As noted, the project includes a variety of design features that would diminish the perceived bulk of the project.

As stated on DEIR page 26, the project sponsor would comply with the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance by paying the applicable in-lieu fee. The utilization of the fund established by the payment of these fees is not an environmental issue that is subject to the current CEQA review of the proposed project.

## Views and Visual Character

### Comment #17

"After discussion ... [Commissioner Alan Martinez] arrived at the following [comment]:

- Issue of 'façade-ism' raised regarding the differentiation of the new 1645 Pacific Avenue building and the vertical addition to the historic 1661 Pacific Avenue building. The commissioner indicated he was fine with the design/façade separation of the two buildings; however, the overall height and bulk would work better if it were reduced by 1-story. He thought the bulk of the proposed new building would overwhelm the 1661 Pacific Avenue historic building." (*Historic Preservation Commission, hearing minutes*)

"Impact of the project on scenic vistas and views. The DEIR states that 'There are no public scenic vistas available from the project vicinity.' (DEIR page 40) This is not an accurate statement nor are the exhibits (page 43) included in the report representative of the view down Pacific Avenue. The exhibits are taken from a vantage point so close to the project that only the project itself and the nearby buildings are included in the frame. Please refer to the photographs attached to this letter for a more accurate representation (Exhibit 1 [see attachment to comment letter in Appendix 1 of this document]).

"The San Francisco General Plan states:

"Objective 1 Emphasis of the Characteristic Pattern Which Gives to the City and its Neighborhoods an Image, a Sense of Purpose, and a Means of Orientation.

"San Francisco has an image and character in its city pattern which depend especially upon views, topography, streets, building form and major landscaping. This pattern gives an organization and sense of purpose to the city, denotes the extent and special nature of districts, and identifies and makes prominent the centers of human activity. The pattern also assists in orientation for travel on foot, by automobile and by public transportation. The city pattern should be recognized, protected and enhanced.'

"The General Plan further states:

"Building height can define districts and centers of activity. These advantages can be achieved without blocking or reduction of views from private properties, public areas or major roadways, if a proper plan for building height is followed.'

“Pacific Avenue was originally developed as the gateway to Pacific Heights. It was designated as an avenue—rather than a street—and it was one of the first links between Pacific Heights, Nob Hill, Montgomery Street and the Embarcadero and the piers.

“The proposed 1645 Pacific project will completely occlude the Pacific Avenue view. See Exhibit 1 attached [to comment letter in Appendix 1 of this document]. The project will substantially and adversely degrade a scenic vista. This constitutes a significant negative impact to the character of the environs that is not mentioned in the DEIR.

“We suggest that the project be held to a 40 to 45 foot maximum height to preserve the significant view to Nob Hill. See exhibit [attached to comment letter in Appendix 1 of this document].

“From the San Francisco General Plan Policy 2.1:

“‘Views from streets can provide a means for orientation and help the observer to perceive the city and its districts more clearly.’ and

“‘Blocking, construction or other impairment of pleasing street views of the Bay or Ocean, distant hills, or other parts of the city can destroy an important characteristic of the unique setting and quality of the city.’

“Visual Character. The DEIR is misleading in that misinterprets the visual character of the project site in comparison to buildings in the Van Ness corridor and buildings on Jackson street that are part of the Van Ness Corridor higher density zoning district. Using Van Ness corridor buildings as justification for the design of the project diminishes the real impact this building will have on the Polk NCD neighborhood fabric and character.

“This building is of overwhelming scale to the Polk NCD and to the immediate context of Pacific Avenue. There are few building of this height and bulk in the Polk NCD and all have had a negative visual impact. They overwhelm the surroundings and dominate the street. (examples) Architectural treatments have been unsuccessful in mitigating the destructive impact of these out of scale structures. The trend of accumulating multiple parcels for large development projects threatens to dismantle the elements that constitute physical character of the Polk NCD: small scale (frontage and height), mixed use, variety of form and materials, rhythm, proportion, and horizontality. Only 2% of buildings along the Polk Street NCD (measured from California Street to Union) are 6-stories while 82% of the buildings are between one and four stories. 64% of the buildings are one to two stories.

“More specifically, this block of Pacific Avenue is a very small-scale street. On this block most of the buildings are one or two stories tall. The two story historic firehouse anchors the scale of the block. Two buildings are 5 stories. The proposed mid-block development is 65 feet to the roof with 3’-9” parapets and 16 foot high penthouses. At this height, it exceeds the height of all of the buildings on Pacific Avenue from Van Ness in the Polk Street NCO and the Pacific Avenue NCO.

“The negative effect of this large building to urban form is compounded by its mid-block location. Typically, corner locations are more preferable for large developments in that they emphasize the ends of the blocks and also have more breathing space for their mass.

“Most of the proposed building presents a shear wall on Pacific Avenue. Although the building includes setbacks, with the exception of the setback over the garage, the setbacks are only six feet and are not continuous. This is hardly enough to be significant, which is why the project sponsor is seeking a bulk exception. The building presents a jumpy massing in stark contrast with the rest of the street. The five-story addition to the retained historic garage, is out of scale to the existing garage, destroying its character. The fact that this portion of the building is designed mimicking an industrial style does little to mitigate the sense of a big mass squashing a little building.



“In Section 5-B, under the ‘Visual Character Impact Analysis’ heading on page 45, the document states that, ‘the visual character and massing of the proposed project would be similar to the larger modern and historical structures in the vicinity to the West and South on Van Ness Avenue and Jackson Street, respectively, and would be consistent with the mixed-use, high-density urban form of the neighborhood and Pacific Avenue corridor.’ It then goes on to state that, ‘for all of the above reasons, the proposed project would not be expected to cause a substantial and demonstrable negative change, or disrupt the existing visual character of the project vicinity.’

“Again, the document only makes references to buildings in the Van Ness corridor, neither of which are visible from Pacific Avenue. It neglects to mention that all of the buildings along the North side of Pacific Avenue between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street are 30 ft or less in height. This is a substantial omission which must be rectified.

“The project is completely out of balance with the rest of Pacific Avenue. The two 5-story buildings to the East of the project site have already begun to skew the balance of the block. The proposed project would continue that trend, but that fact is not called out anywhere in the document when assessing the impact the project would have on the visual character of the area.

“The diagrams in the document, on pages 42 and 43, also neglect to illustrate the North side of Pacific Avenue.

“Also in Section 5-B, under the ‘Cumulative Aesthetic Impacts’ heading on page 46, the document notes that, ‘the proposed project would not result in a cumulative significant impact on the visual character of the project area, when considered together with the recently approved projects at 1946 Polk Street and 1650 Broadway described previously in the Land Use section on page 37.’

“We are concerned with how the document defines the term, ‘project area’ because it allows for the referencing of projects that are several blocks away and in altogether different zones and corridors. Also, by only referencing new developments, and not the existing structures along the North side of Pacific Avenue, the document isn’t fully addressing the impact of the project. The analysis should pay equal attention to what currently exists, and not reference developments that aren’t relevant (in terms of not being anywhere near the proposed project), just because they’re new.

“In conclusion, the Land Use Character, Visual Character, and Cumulative Aesthetics impact analyses in the DEIR are both inadequate, and in some parts, inaccurate, and need to be corrected.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“I’d also like to comment on Section 5B, which is the Visual Character Impact Analysis heading which begins on page 45. The document states the visual character and mass of the proposed project would be similar to the long-term modern and historical structures in the vicinity to the west and south on Van Ness Avenue and Jackson Street respectively.

“So again I think the document is making references to the buildings in the Van Ness corridor neither of which mind you are visible from Pacific Avenue. So it is really a difference of what you see on the street versus on the block. So if you are there in the neighborhood, you are really looking at the streetscape as opposed to what is on the block.

“I’ve also found this interest—I don’t know if I can share a picture here. It’s actually in the DEIR. It is probably a little bit difficult to see, but what you can tell is that, you know, the pictures here in the DEIR are only focused on the south side of the street, which is where the project is located. They don’t show the north side of street which is comprised of mainly one- and two-story buildings 30 feet high.

“So what you’ve got already is two five-story projects on the corner on the south side and then you have the proposed project, which is even larger, but on the other side of the street you basically have 30-foot-high buildings.

“So I think the DEIR should really take reference to that to point out what is on the north side of the street when talking about compatibility in the neighborhood overall.” (*Jon Faust, Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

“My name is Ann Thilges, and I’m part of the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association. I live on Jackson Street at 1650. I’m going to speak to you today regarding the project on scenic vistas and views.

“The first photo I have is the current vista down Pacific Avenue at the moment. The Draft EIR states that there are no public scenic vistas available from the project vicinity. This is not an accurate statement, nor are the exhibits exhibited in the DEIR, nor are they representative of the views down Pacific Avenue.

“The exhibits in the DEIR are taken from a vantage point that are so close to the project that only the project itself and the nearby buildings are included in the frame. You can refer to page 43 of the Draft EIR or the photo that Mr. Faust had put up previously.

“So this photo that I have placed now are the—is the current vista down Pacific Avenue, and I have got another photo that we have prepared with buildings. It is showing the blockage now of that vista that is currently there. The San Francisco general plan states in Objective 1, emphasis of the characteristic pattern which gives the city and its neighborhoods an image, a sense of purpose, and a means of orientation. San Francisco has an image and character in its city pattern which depends especially upon views, topography, streets, building forms, and major landscaping. This pattern gives an organization and sense of purpose to the city, denotes the extent and special nature of districts and identifies the main prominence of centers of human activity.

“The pattern also assists in orientation for travel on foot, by automobile, and public transportation. The city pattern should be recognized, protected, and enhanced.

“The general plan further states building height can define districts and centers of activity. These advantages can be achieved without blocking or reduction of views from private properties, public areas, or major roadways if a proper plan for building height is followed.

“Pacific Avenue was originally developed as the gateway to Pacific Heights up at the current view back up. Again, that vista shows the gateway. It was designed as an avenue rather than a street.” (*Ann Thilges, Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

“In addition, I would like to point out in Section 5B under the Cumulative Aesthetic Impact heading on page 46 the document notes that the proposed project would not result in a cumulative significant impact on the visual character of the project area when considered together with the recently approved 1946 Street and [1650] Broadway discussed previously in the land-use section on page 37. I am concerned about how the document defines the term ‘project area’ because it allows for the references of projects that are several blocks away. We ask the Commission to extend the time. Please extend the time for comment for this particular project.” (*Robyn Tucker, Pacific Avenue Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

### **Response #17**

The evaluation of visual impacts of the proposed project on pages 38 to 51 of the DEIR, which includes photographs of the existing site and vicinity and photosimulations of the proposed

project, noted that the project would change the visual character of the project site. However, the visual character and massing of the proposed building would be similar to the larger modern and historical structures in the area, particularly on Van Ness Avenue to the west and Jackson Street to the south. Moreover, the project also would be consistent with the mixed-use, high-density urban form of the neighborhood. The photos provided with one of the comment letters regarding the occlusion of the view down Pacific Avenue were taken with a telephoto lens, and are not representative of the views experienced by pedestrians. The photomontages in the DEIR more accurately represent the pedestrian perspective.

Regarding the neighborhood context and the design of the proposed project, when evaluating the context of the existing built (and planned) environment in which the proposed project would be developed, buildings located within two blocks of the proposed project are considered in the DEIR. The 1946 Polk Street building is one-half block to the east of the project site, while the 1650 Broadway Street building is located less than 600 feet in a direct line from the site, or approximately one block to the north and one block to the west. The two approved buildings are included in the DEIR discussion of five-story and taller buildings near the project.

In an urban area with variations in the topography such as San Francisco, the visibility of buildings depends to a very large degree on vantage point of the observer. From many sidewalk vantage points along Pacific Avenue, some of the taller buildings on and to the west of Van Ness Avenue are visible, while many others are blocked.

The visual analysis summarized in Section V.B of the DEIR is not limited to any single viewpoint, but rather encompasses a representative viewpoint for various vantage points available in the project area.

Regarding the comments about the project and Pacific Avenue, there are differences between the north and south sides of Pacific Avenue in the project block. The lower-rise buildings on the north side of the street are visible in the images presented in DEIR Figures 16 and 17, pages 42 and 43, as well as buildings on the south side of the street.

The proposed building design, with its progressively stepped-up form and multiple recesses, is intended to provide a visual transition between the large scale buildings along the Van Ness corridor to the west and the smaller-scale buildings on Pacific Avenue and Polk Street to the east of the project site. With the construction of the proposed project, there would be three buildings

of five stories or more on the south side of the street, while the north side is developed with two- and three-story buildings and the topography slopes downhill toward Broadway. The project would not present a “shear wall” on Pacific Avenue. The massing would be articulated through setbacks and varying rooflines, as shown in Figures C&R.3 and 4, pages 34 and 35

Regarding potential conflicts with the objectives of the General Plan, as illustrated on DEIR Figures 16 and 17, the project would not substantially degrade a public scenic vista and would not conflict with General Plan objectives and policies protecting the urban pattern that defines San Francisco’s character. The proposed project would not be expected to cause a substantial and demonstrable negative change.

Regarding the request to extend the public comment period, the 45-day comment period for the DEIR, was extended from November 18, 2009 through January 19, 2010, which is longer than required by CEQA.

## POPULATION AND HOUSING

### Affordable Housing

#### Comment #18

“Per census data from 2006 – 2008, over half our population makes less than \$75,000/year. Arguably those numbers are worse since the recent recession. SFGate reported that ‘A San Francisco household requires an annual income of \$196,878 to afford a median-priced home in the city.’ (June 2008) Reports state that one of the primary reasons families leave San Francisco is because of the housing costs. San Francisco is effectively losing its middle class.

“Yet, this development fails to offer [1] any on site BMR housing. This has a devastating effect on the fabric of the neighborhood and the ability for this city to retain low- to middle-class residents and families. While still only an option for the developer, we feel this is a fatal flaw the City has allowed developers to use. The DEIR states on page 50, ‘There is shortage of affordable housing in the City; however, this deficit is an existing condition.’ The DEIR cites the problem but this development does nothing to solve the problem.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“My name is Wylie Adams. I live at 1601 Sacramento Street at Larkin. I am also part of the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association. I wanted to address housing today, and I recognize the DEIR is a pretty substantial tool that you use to make your decision. I think this area needs to be flushed out more in the final EIR.

“Really quickly some facts and some data. 2006 – 2008 over half our population makes less than \$75,000 a year, arguably the numbers are worse now that we are in the recession. A quote from SF Gate says a San Francisco household requires an annual income of \$196,000 to afford a median-priced home in the city. Other reports state that the primary reason for families leaving San Francisco is because of housing cost.

“Yet, this development fails to do two things. One, it fails to offer any BMR on site. I realize this is an option for the developer; however, I think it is a failure of this development. The DEIR states on page 50 that there is shortage of affordable housing in the city; however, this deficit is an existing condition. Even though the DEIR cites these problems, this development does nothing to solve the problem.” (*Wylie Adams, Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

#### “8) Affordable Housing

“Support for affordable housing in the Applicants application (copy attached [to comment letter in Appendix 1 of this document]) to the SFHAC Endorsement Application they state:

““We will pay the affordable housing in lieu fee for the project. However, projected proforma sales prices of the 26 studio apartments range from \$526,000 to \$586,000 providing a relatively affordable price point for housing in the neighborhood. They are affordable by design.’

“Can nothing be done but the use of ‘fee’ to dismiss housing impacts should be decided project by project [sic]. The development of a City for the Rich exclusively was never intended by the California codes

requirements for affordable housing. The placement of nearly 100% of affordable housing in poor neighborhood should not be allowed." (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #18**

The *Planning Code* requirements and project approvals are summarized in the DEIR on pages 33-35. The City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (*Planning Code* Sections 315-315.9) sets forth the regulations for market rate projects to contribute towards affordable housing production. The Ordinance allows market-rate developers to exercise one of three options for compliance: (1) on-site production, (2) off-site production, or (3) in-lieu fee payment. Compliance with the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance through the Ordinance's in-lieu fee payment option is discussed in the DEIR on page 26. *Planning Code* Section 315.6 calculates the in-lieu housing fee payment based on the number of units required under the off-site provision, or 20 percent under Section 315.6(1)(b), which is higher than the 15 percent requirement under the on-site option. The proposed project would contribute to affordable housing production in San Francisco through compliance with the City's affordable housing ordinance.

The existing shortage of affordable housing in San Francisco, which would exist with or without the project, is not an environmental impact of the proposed project. Nevertheless, the proposed project would increase the supply of affordable housing in San Francisco by paying an in-lieu fee for Below Market Rate (BMR) housing if the proposed project is approved.

The appropriateness of providing BMR units off-site rather than on-site is a socioeconomic issue, which does not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions. Therefore, it was not necessary to evaluate this issue in the EIR.

Housing conditions and the project's impact are discussed on pages 47-51 of the DEIR, including the criteria for significant population and housing impacts under CEQA (page 48). None of the criteria for a significant impact includes housing affordability. The DEIR concluded that the proposed project would not have a significant population or housing impact. The existing shortage of affordable housing in San Francisco, which would exist with or without the project, is not an environmental impact of the proposed project.

## Employment

### Comment #19

“Auto crafts jobs are also being lost, nine of them with this project alone and we are quickly losing any balance between high end housing and small businesses.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“My name is Leslie Ball, and I’m part of the Middle Polk neighborhood. I live at 1650 Jackson Street. I would like to speak on the character of the neighborhood.

“The DEIR states on page 48 the demolition of the approximate 27,275 square foot of automotive service space on the site would result in displacement of approximately nine existing employees, dot, dot, dot. This loss would be offset by the proposed retail space, which would accommodate approximately 10 new employees.

“The Polk Street NCD is a mixed-use neighborhood that includes a variety of commercial spaces in addition to housing and retail. The disappearance of these spaces and uses is increasing as the development of speculative housing projects displace them.

“The proposed project demolishes 27,000 square feet of high-bay commercial space and pushes out the services businesses that occupy them along with the nine jobs. Although the draft states that the retail space for the new development included will replace the jobs and services used will leave the neighborhood forever and most likely seek more economic space outside of the City. This will reduce the diversity of the businesses in the historically mixed-use neighborhood.

“The community impact of the development trend of replacing neighborhood commercial with speculative housing will be the homogenization of our neighborhood and the reduction of neighborhood services.

“We suggest this is a highly undesirable outcome especially in light of the increasingly high vacancy rate in the residential properties in the City. The impact of job reduction should be highlighted as a negative impact as well given that no new businesses are being planned or proposed, merely space for possible accommodations of unknown retail. The mix commercial services used in Polk Street NCD is a distinctive feature of the neighborhood character.

“Historically at the service at garages and similar businesses are in support of the automotive showrooms on the Van Ness district. The [inaudible] space also provides a kind of space necessary for builders, suppliers, and similar businesses.

“We suggest that the DEIR evaluate the need for both the uses and type of space these [inaudible] spaces provide, the cumulative, negative impact of their demolition on the neighborhood’s diversity and services available in the City. Thank you.” (*Leslie Ball, Middle Polk Neighborhood, oral comments*)

“Lastly, the buildings that are there today do provide employment, much needed jobs that are there that are very real today, and it would be a shame to displace these jobs too early, too soon only to have to wait for financing to become available for another luxury condominium complex.” (*Dawn Trennert, Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

**Response #19**

The existing 1645 Pacific building is primarily used as a parking garage, with a small automotive service business in the 1661 Pacific building. The above-noted effects of the proposed project on automotive service space, retail space, mix of types of commercial space, types of businesses in the project vicinity, availability of neighborhood services, jobs, and residential vacancy rates are socioeconomic impacts, which do not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions. The effect of the proposed project on these economic factors are not CEQA issues and is not evaluated in the EIR.

Housing and employment conditions, and the proposed project's impact, are discussed on pages 47-51 of the DEIR, including the criteria for significant impacts under CEQA (page 48). None of the criteria for a significant impact includes employment displacement, although it should be noted that the estimated approximately 10 on-site retail employees that would be accommodated by the proposed project would offset the 9 existing jobs on the project site that would be displaced. The DEIR concluded that the proposed project would not have a significant environmental housing or employment impact.

The effect of the proposed project on employment is a socioeconomic impact, which does not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions. The effect of the proposed project on employment was not evaluated in the EIR.

**Housing Type Mix**

**Comment #20**

"Out of balance housing mix:

"As is, this development [2] has an over abundance of studio apartments—which fails to support retention of families and is only targeted at the most affluent. As planned, well over half of the units are studio apartments (26 out of 48).

"26	Studio	54%	
"7	1 bedroom	15%	[=] 69%
"12	2 bedroom	25%	
"3	3 bedroom	6%	
"48	Total		

"The disproportionate number of studios or 'junior' one bedroom units does not provide the type of housing San Francisco needs or more specifically what Middle Polk/Nob Hill needs. This is more typical of pied-a-tiers, timeshares or corporate housing and does not further the housing needs of the city. This is an unfair burden to home owners and the city's tax base.



“The DEIR states on page 50, ‘The proposed 48 residential [units] in the proposed project would help to accommodate part of this [housing] need.’ This development needs to commit to providing appropriate 2- and 3-bedroom apartments for families.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“ ... as already stated by Michael Schoolnik, that this development has an over abundance of studio apartments. 54 percent of the units are studios. 70 percent are studio and one-bedroom apartments. This does nothing to save our families and keep them in the city to retain our families in the city.

“Additionally, I think the housing that this development offers caters more to timeshares and corporate housing that is becoming a lot more prevalent in the city, and I don’t think it is the type of housing that our neighborhood needs or the city needs.” (*Wylie Adams, Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

### **Response #20**

The Project Description, on page 13 of the DEIR, describes the proposed project as constructing a multi-use building with ground floor retail and condominium residential units on the upper levels, not timeshare or corporate housing units.

Housing conditions and the project’s impact are discussed on pages 47-51 of the DEIR, including the criteria for significant population and housing impacts under CEQA (page 48). None of the criteria for a significant impact includes unit mix. The DEIR concluded that the proposed project would not have a significant population or housing impact. The *Planning Code* (Section 723.1 – Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial District) does not regulate unit mix.

The effect of the mix of the project’s dwelling unit sizes on families is a socioeconomic impact, which does not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions. This issue was not evaluated in the DEIR.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Comment #21

“With that said, I have one particular comment on the Cultural Resource section on page 56. It says that —basically, it is saying that the building is not a contributor to, quote, to an auto-themed historic district because it predates the introduction of the automobile to San Francisco.

“That statement may be fine, but then it goes on and says in essence the building was then altered to accommodate auto-related uses. That seems to me to say that at some point in time that the building was changed and could legitimately be thought of as part of the Van Ness auto row district. But then it continues and says and is not intimately connected with the theme.

“So I would like to know in a response how that all hangs together so to speak. The first part is fine, but if you change the building to essentially become an auto-related use, then why is it not related to the theme of auto-related uses?” (*Commissioner Hisashi Sugaya, oral comments*)

“After discussion, [Commissioner Karl Hasz] arrived at the following [comment]:

- “• The Commissioner stated that there was not enough context information provided in the Draft EIR and supporting Historic documents to comment or suggest direction, especially with 2 properties proposed for development in the Historic Auto Row District.

“After discussion, [Commissioner Andrew Wolfram] arrived at the following [comment]:

- “• Regarding both the 1645 Pacific Avenue and the 1661 Pacific Avenue historic building, the Commissioner didn’t find the HRER very helpful in providing more historical context of the existing buildings and adjacent area, and thought the historic analysis could be more thorough using additional visual representation.

“Commissioner [Courtney] Damkroger (absent, sent comments via email):

- “• Agree that 1645 Pacific does not appear to be significant.
- “• Accept determination that 1661 Pacific does appear to be significant as a contributor to a potential CR historic district.
- “• Based on the DEIR and observation of the site, but without the benefit of the staff presentation, I have reservations about the determination of no significant adverse impact to 1661 Pacific. I appreciate the retention of the façade and the 15-foot setback. While I understand the staff’s argument that a substantial portion (rear and side walls) of the building are compromised, replaced or a party wall, it is the volume of the building that in part lends it its significance. The front façade clearly is the most important elevation of the building and the element that most conveys its significance, but removal of all but the front facade and construction of a new building behind it, makes it difficult to convey original character of the building. The farther set back the new building, the better. Fifteen feet does not seem enough, though I don’t know the magic number.

“After discussion, [Commissioner Alan Martinez] arrived at the following [comment]:

- “• Overall, the Commissioner considers the 1661 Pacific Avenue building as a whole (all existing roof/walls/facades) as a historic resource even though some of the facades may not be original.

“Dawn Trennert: ... would like to see the historic nature of the project site and surrounding area is highlighted more into the project design and Draft EIR. Since there are surrounding historic building[s], Ms. Trennert believed it would be an excellent opportunity to celebrate the past. She suggested that the project reframe from throwing out the ‘old’ for the ‘new’ and highlight the historic nature of the adjacent neighborhood.” (*Historic Preservation Commission, hearing minutes*)

“While the individual buildings may not always be strictly historically significant, all of these small contextual industrial buildings contribute to the look, feel, and function of the neighborhood. As such, the proposed project may conflict with the City *Planning Code* Section 101.1, [policy] ... 7:

“‘7. That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.’

“In addition, on page 56 the DEIR states that ‘the building at 1645 Pacific Avenue is not a contributor to an auto-themed historic district, because it predates the introduction of the automobile to San Francisco, was altered to accommodate auto-related uses, and is not intimately connected with the theme.’

“We would contend that an auto garage is a related use and intimately connected with the theme, and conclude that the building is a significant supporting structure to the auto-related thematic historic district. This is supported by the McGrew historic report on page 12:

“‘Other buildings directly connected to the theme, but of secondary importance, such as garages, paint shops or repair shops that contained original exterior and interior features such as garage doors and/or auto ramps designed especially for the automotive work, would also be considered contributing structures.

“The analysis states that 1661 Pacific Ave. is a historically significant structure relating to Van Ness auto row. Yet the design of the project merely retains the façade of the building, compromising its historic significance.

“We would [contend that the] cumulative impact of the removal of auto-related industries and buildings, compromises the intent of the Auto Row historic district. CEQA requires the analysis of cumulative impacts but the DEIR seems to gloss over the impact of the continuous loss of auto related businesses by simply stating that other projects have not been found to have significant architectural resource impacts.”

(*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“Also I referenced that we were at the Historic Preservation Commission last week and that Commission thought that there was some significant lacking in telling the complete story of the historic corner of our neighborhood, its significance in [the] Auto Row and the significance of the buildings that are there today.” (*Dawn Trennert, Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

“The San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission 12/2/2009 minutes state:

“‘Commission[er] Wolfram: Commented that the historic resource report could be more thorough. There was very little documentation to back up some of the statements that were made in the report. Some interpretation could be made in the lobby of the building that talks about the Riding Academy and its history.’

“We disagree with the finding [that] the project would have less-than-significant effects on historical resources.” (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #21**

Section V.D. Cultural Resources, pages 52 to 62 of the DEIR, evaluates the effect of the proposed project on historic resources on the project site and vicinity, and incorporates the evaluations of two independent qualified architectural historians (Historic Resources Evaluations [HREs]) and the evaluations in response (Historic Resource Evaluation Responses [HRERs]) by two historical resources specialists of the Planning Department.

- In January, 2007, Patrick McGrew, an architectural historian, prepared HREs of 1645 and 1661 Pacific Avenue. He concluded that the building(s) did not appear to be eligible for listing as an individual resource in either the National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP) nor the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHP) under any of the three criteria (events, person, design/construction). Further, the structures did not appear to be a contributor to a potential California Register Historic District (CRHD).
- The City’s HRER of November 2007 concurred with the consultant’s HRE for 1645 Pacific Avenue, because the structure was not originally build for an auto-related use, and even though it was used subsequently for auto-related uses, recent alterations to the building have destroyed any historic integrity it may once have had. The HRER concluded that 1661 Pacific Avenue also does not appear to be eligible as an individual resource. However, the HRER found that 1661 Pacific Avenue 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): San Francisco’s “Auto Row,” which was located along Van Ness Avenue and extended onto the side streets.

The original proposal included demolition of both buildings, which would have resulted in a significant, adverse impact to historic resources. Consequently, the project was redesigned to retain the significant historic features of 1661 Pacific Avenue, including the remaining front façade and historic roofline.

- At the request of the San Francisco Planning Department, the architectural historical firm of Page & Turnbull analyzed the proposed project and its effect on the Van Ness Avenue

“Auto Row” potential historic district. In an April 23, 2008, memorandum, Page & Turnbull determined that neither the demolition of 1645 Pacific Avenue nor the partial demolition of 1661 Pacific Avenue as part of the proposed project would have an impact on the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” historic district.

Additional analysis was provided in a memorandum dated July 14, 2008 in which Page & Turnbull concluded that the proposed project, as designed, would be in compliance with the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*, and would not impact the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” potential historic district. The authors found that the project would preserve the existing character and feeling of the potential historic district, and would not affect the district’s overall integrity, ability to convey its historical significance, or eligibility for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

- In a subsequent City HRER, September 26, 2008, the City agreed with the Page & Turnbull conclusions that the proposed project, as designed, would be compatible with the potential district in terms of its height, scale, massing, fenestration pattern, and other features. The City concluded that the project design would reflect the varied architectural styles of the proposed Van Ness Auto Row District, and would not have a significant adverse impact upon the district.

These four documents were available for review in the project file at the City Planning Department when the DEIR was published. These reports are included as Appendices numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6 in this Comments & Responses document.

On June 17, 2010, subsequent to publication of the DEIR, the Planning Department published the Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures Survey, which was endorsed by the Historic Preservation Commission on July 21, 2010. The survey concluded that neither 1645 Pacific nor 1661 Pacific are significant as contributing resources to the Van Ness Auto Row. The Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures Survey DPR primary record form for 1645-1661 Pacific is included as Appendix 7 in this Comments & Responses document. Nonetheless, based on the November 2007 HRER cited above, the Planning Department has not changed its conclusion that the 1661 Pacific structure is an historic resource.

Based on the standards of significance for historic resources established by Section 15064.5 of the *CEQA Guidelines* and the City’s guidelines and criteria for conducting historic resource

evaluations pursuant to CEQA, the DEIR concluded that construction of the proposed project would not result in any significant impacts to the historic resources on the project site and the vacant Engine Co. No. 8 Landmark Building at 1648 Pacific Avenue across from the project site. The project would not have a significant adverse impact on the potential Van Ness Auto Row District. There is no other identified potential historic district in the vicinity of the project.

The City can require design changes as part of the Conditional Use Permit review process, which will include an evaluation of the project's design and consistency with the City's design policies and guidelines established in the General Plan.

As noted in the DEIR, the Page & Turnbull memo and the September 26, 2008 HRER, the structural system of the 1661 Pacific Avenue building has been significantly compromised. The historic rear wall was removed and replaced with concrete masonry units (CMU); the party wall separating 1661 Pacific Avenue and 1645 Pacific Avenue structurally belongs to 1645 Pacific Avenue; and the exterior wall between the subject building and its opposite adjacent neighbor appears to be wood frame construction that is likely original to the building. Thus, the 1661 Pacific Avenue building retains its historic street elevation, one sidewall, and its roof structure. Due to the existing condition of the 1661 Pacific Avenue building, there is little left of the resource; however, the subject building would be designed to convey its significance.

The September 26, 2008 HRER indicated that the most important character-defining features of 1661 Pacific Avenue building are the front façade and the historic roofline. As stated on pages 59 and 60 of the DEIR, the proposed project would retain the historic façade of the 1661 Pacific Avenue building and make use of the existing vehicular entrance for a vehicular entrance to the project's below-grade parking garage. The proposed project would also respect the historic roofline of the 1661 Pacific Avenue building in that the addition would be set back from the front façade 15 feet. As stated in the HRER, the Department encourages a greater setback but believes that the project as proposed allows the subject building to convey its historic roofline, massing, and scale. The new façade behind this setback would be designed in a simple vernacular style with brick cladding and punched window openings with industrial sash windows.

The DEIR cites other development projects near Van Ness Avenue and the Nob Hill and Russian Hill neighborhood that have recently been approved or are currently under review. None of these projects were found to have significant impacts on historic resources. The DEIR concluded that the proposed project would not adversely affect historic resources, so it does not have the

potential to make a “cumulatively considerable” contribution. Section 15130(a) of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires an EIR to discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. In accordance with the Guidelines, the City has discussed the rationale for concluding that the project’s incremental effect would not be cumulatively considerable. The DEIR concluded that the project would not cause a significant cumulative impact on historic architectural resources.

Policy 7 concerns preservation of landmarks and historic buildings. As discussed on pages 54 to 60 of the DEIR, neither 1645 Pacific nor 1661 Pacific is a designated landmark and only 1661 Pacific is considered an historic resource. As noted above, the proposed project’s preservation of the existing 1661 Pacific façade and the preservation of the first 15 feet of depth of the building (as measured from the street façade), while redeveloping the rear of the building, would not compromise its historic significance because the project would rehabilitate and preserve the character-defining features of the building (the front façade and the roofline), that are the characteristics that render the building contributory to the potential Van Ness Auto Row Historic District, and thus preservation of the building’s front façade and roofline would retain its contribution to the potential district.

The proposed design at 1645 Pacific Avenue would be compatible with the potential district in terms of its height, scale, massing, fenestration pattern, and other features. Its design would reflect the varied architectural styles of the buildings that are in the automobile-themed district (which are interspersed with residential and commercial buildings) and would have a less-than-significant impact upon the Van Ness Auto Row District.

#### **Comment #22**

“James Jonenitis [sic] [Joannides]: Provided some visual and verbal overview of the history of the project site and existing buildings, which included photos and newspaper clippings for former occupants of the site and buildings. He also provided a site plan and elevation of the San Francisco Riding Academy, which was a former occupant of the 1645 Pacific Avenue building. Mr. [Joannides] mentioned he would be happy to provide the background information a part of the record.” (*Historic Preservation Commission, hearing minutes*)

“This is the sort of transitional advertisement for one of the occupants of the building. As you can see, they do—originally, it had been a stables and an electric car garage, and then a garage called Ben Hur Stables. They do both smithing—they are still doing smithing, but they are also doing contemporary

automobile repair including DUCO enameling which is a very special process.” (*James Joannides, oral comments*)

**Response #22**

The commenters are welcome to submit supplemental historical documents to the Planning Department on the project site and vicinity for inclusion in the record, and these additional documents will be considered by decision makers during their deliberation on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives. The DEIR notes on page 55 that 1645 Pacific Avenue was constructed as the San Francisco Riding Academy. The information presented in the DEIR’s historical analysis on pages 55-60 was based on a project-specific evaluation of the existing building on the project site and the site’s historical background and value performed by qualified architectural historians, and the conclusions of the evaluations were confirmed by the Planning Department. The analysis determined that, because of numerous alterations in the past, the former San Francisco Riding Academy building at 1645 Pacific does not retain sufficient historic integrity to be considered an historic resource. An Improvement Measure has been identified that would require documentation of the 1645 Pacific Avenue building’s history.

The background documents used for the historical analysis are listed in Response #21 and are included (with historic photos) as Appendices 3, 4, 5, and 6 of this document.

**Comment #23**

“The Historic Report written by Patrick McGrew Associates erroneously locates the project within the Van Ness Plan and recounts the entire history of Van Ness Street while ignoring any history of the Polk Street neighborhood (in which it is located). This report is the basis for the DEIR findings. We are of the opinion that the report, in ignoring the Polk Street neighborhood altogether is inadequate and requires further development to meet CEQA requirements.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“I’m James Joannides. I live at 1740 Polk Street. I’m here to address some of the errors and omissions in the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

“The report uses sort of a boiler plate [inaudible] Van Ness plan to describe the character of Polk Street. I guess it was from the [inaudible] associates, and they didn’t generate specific history or background of Polk, which is a very small-scale street.” (*James Joannides, oral comments*)



**Response #23**

The HRE prepared by Patrick McGrew Associates locates the project within the area analyzed for the Van Ness Plan. However, the references to the Plan in the McGrew Associates' HRE were based on Map 4, Significant Buildings, which shows the Plan area extending eastward to Polk Street and encompassing the project site. Appendix A of the Plan, which lists Significant Buildings in the Plan area, includes buildings on Polk Street. Other maps in the Plan—including Map 2, Height and Bulk Districts, and Map 3, Landscape Plan—also show the Plan area extending eastward to Polk Street. The HRE reflects some of the ambiguity contained in the Van Ness Area Plan with respect to the planning boundaries.

As concluded in the DEIR, the building at 1661 Pacific Avenue was determined eligible for listing as a contributor to the proposed Van Ness Avenue Auto Row Historic District in November 2007, prior to completion of the Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures Survey in 2010, and its history of use is consistent with the historic pattern of automobile-related development within the potential Van Ness Auto Row Historic District. Although the Historic Evaluation reports cited above do not recount "the entire history of Van Ness Avenue," a discussion of that history is relevant to the consideration of the proposed project's potential impacts to historic resources. The uses on the project site did not have the same connection to Polk Street, which, was devoted to neighborhood commercial uses serving people living on Nob Hill and Russian Hill, not to the auto industry. Because the project site did not have a functional connection to the shopping district focused on Polk Street, a lengthy discussion on the history of Polk Street was not included in the historic reports, nor in Section V.D of the DEIR.

All of the historic architectural evaluations cited in Response #21 identify the neighborhood context of the project site which includes the Polk Street neighborhood.

**Comment #24**

"And secondly, they did not acknowledge or consult with the author of the recent rezoning of Pacific Avenue just a half a block away. They rezoned to preserve the historic character of Pacific Avenue and did a whole cultural and historical inventory which would have been a good basis of the report, and I believe [CEQA]—I don't know which section, but it does require you to sort of reach out to other agencies who have done these sort of reports." (*James Joannides, oral comments*)

**Response #24**

The Pacific Avenue NCD is located approximately one block to the east of the project site and was enacted in 2007. As noted above, Section V.D. Cultural Resources, pages 52 to 62 of the DEIR, evaluates the effect of the project on historic resources on the project site and vicinity, and incorporates the evaluations of independent qualified architectural historians and historical resources specialists of the Planning Department. This evaluation complies with CEQA and is sufficient to inform decision-makers and the public about the physical environmental effects and consequences of a proposed project on historic resources, and additional analysis is not required.

**Comment #25**

“6) The Buildings are a Historic Resource [sic].

“The NOP for the EIR identified the building/area as potential contribution to a National Historic District neighborhood. Specifically the NOP stated:

“‘Cultural and Paleontological Resources: The EIR will analyze potential impacts on prehistoric and historic archaeological resources, and on historic architectural resources. It appears that development of the project site began at the end of the 19th century, and by the close of the century a building had been constructed on the site (1645 Pacific Avenue) and occupied by the San Francisco Riding Academy. The 1645 Pacific Avenue building was repaired after the 1906 earthquake and fire, and was subsequently altered. The 1661 Pacific Avenue building has been determined to be contributory to a potential Van Ness Avenue Auto Row Historic District. The EIR will evaluate the potential historic and architectural significance of the existing buildings on the project site (1645 and 1661 Pacific Avenue).’

“It is unclear why the Patrick McGrew, McGrew/Architecture, Historic Resource Evaluation Report, 1645 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, California, was not included in the DEIR or made easily available online. Such a critical document, and part of the only alternative considered, should have been included for broad public review and comment.

“We have learned that the Mc Grew report was not an independent third party report and in fact was commission[ed] by the applicant and done prior to the submission of his application. As such we must dismiss its findings as bought findings and request an independent study of the sites.

“The applicant brags about this in their SHAC application (attached [to comment letter located in Appendix 1 of this document]) stating:

“‘Our original plan called for the demolition of the structure at 1661 Pacific. Prior to acquisition of the development site, we had a historic resource report done by Patrick McGrew,’

“The San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission 12/2/2009 minutes state:

“‘1645 Pacific Avenue Project, - Review and Comments on the Draft Environment Impact Report on the proposed project would demolish the existing two-story, 27,275 sq.ft. commercial building (1645 Pacific Ave), retain the front façade of the adjacent building (1661 Pacific Ave.) and construct a new six-story, 65-foot-tall residential and retail building located on a block bounded by Pacific and Van Ness Avenues and Jackson and Polk Streets (Assessor’s Block 0595, Lot 013). The existing

1661 Pacific Ave. building is a contributor to the Van Ness Auto Row District. Preliminary Recommendation: The Historic Preservation Commission will discuss the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to frame their written comments on the adequacy of the DEIR, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

“James Joannides—Resident at Polk and Washington Neighborhood—expressed concern about the scale of the project and the cultural resources along this part of the automobile repair row.

“Dawn Trennert—Middle Polk Neighborhood Association—expressed the need to preserve the historic nature and highlights of the area as new projects come into the Auto Row Historic District.’

“Since the City has this commission it should be required to send it concerns about the DEIR in order for the City to complete [its] study of the projects CEQA requirements. The City exists as a single entity under law and cannot just say that the right hand can ignore the left hand when it suits them (cannot claim ignorance as an excuse).” (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

### **Response #25**

Section V.D of the DEIR presents the results of the more detailed and in-depth evaluation of the project’s potential impacts on historic resources. As detailed and concluded therein, the building at 1645 Pacific Avenue does not meet any of the established criteria for historic significance. It therefore does not constitute an historic resource pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.5. The DEIR does identify 1661 Pacific Avenue as an historic resource.

In Response #21, the historic evaluation reports prepared for the project are identified and the salient points of each report are noted. These reports were available for public review at the San Francisco Planning Department, consistent with the requirements set forth in Section 15150 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. They are now included in this document as appendices.

It has been the practice for decades that for all proposed projects in San Francisco that are potentially significant cultural resources, an HRE is prepared by qualified architectural historians selected by and contracted with the project sponsor. Pursuant to Article 36 CFR Part 61 of the Code of Federal Regulations, professional consultants must maintain their objectivity and independence irrespective of who retains their services. The Planning Department responds to the consultant-prepared HRE with a Historic Resource Evaluation Response (HREER) that contains the City’s evaluation of a building’s value as an historic resource and the impact of a proposed project on the potential historic resource.

The practice to have project applicants retain the professional consultants used to prepare technical studies and EIRs is condoned by Section 15084(d) of the *CEQA Guidelines*. Pursuant to CEQA, the City of San Francisco is the official author of the EIR and the technical documents on

which it is based. The City is legally liable for the conclusions presented in the EIR. As required by Section 15084(e) of the CEQA Guidelines, the Planning Department, not a private consultant, prepared the HRER on which the DEIR was based. The Planning Department has determined that, as published, the DEIR provides an adequate and objective analysis of the proposed project's potential impacts on the environment, including on historic resources.

The comments of the Historic Preservation Commission are addressed in the CEQA process. Each of the Commissioners' comments have been included in this Comments and Responses document, with responses provided to each comment in accordance with the requirements of CEQA

The comments are noted and will be considered by the decision makers during their deliberation on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

**Comment #26**

"After discussion, [Commissioner Andrew Wolfram] arrived at the following [comment]:

- "• The Commissioner also thought that historical documentation (HABs) of the two subject buildings should be added to the Draft EIR as mitigation.

"After discussion, [Commissioner Diane Matsuda] arrived at the following [comment]:

- "• Commissioner Matsuda also would like [to] see documentation of the buildings history added to the mitigation measures.

"After discussion, [Commissioner Charles Chase] arrived at the following [comment]:

- "• The Commissioner echoes the comments previously stated by the other commissioner. Specifically, the Auto Row Historic District history of the area and San Francisco Riding Academy [need] to be looked at in more detail and addressed in the Draft EIR through a documentation mitigation measure." (*Historic Preservation Commission, hearing minutes*)

"The San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission 12/2/2009 minutes state:

"'Commission[er Alan] Martinez: Commented that 3 stories instead of 4 on top of 1661 would be part of the mitigation.'

"'Commissioner [Charles] Chase commented that the project sponsor should/could make a gesture through mitigation measures to interpret that period of evolution of these buildings. The Page and Turnbull memorandum should be part of this documentation reviewed by the public.

(*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #26**

As noted above, the proposed project's demolition of the 1645 Pacific Avenue building and the rear portion of the 1661 Pacific Avenue building and construction of the six-story project, which

would be set back from and retain the façade of the 1661 Pacific Avenue building, would constitute a less-than-significant historic resources impact under CEQA.

Although mitigation is not required for impacts that are less than significant, improvement measures diminish project effects that the environmental analysis found to be less than significant. In response to this comment, the following revisions are made to add a new Improvement Measure regarding historical documentation to the DEIR.

The Table of Contents, page i of the DEIR, is revised as follows:

B. Summary of Impacts and Mitigation and Improvement Measures..... S-2

The Table of Contents, page ii of the DEIR, is revised as follows:

Table S-1 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation and Improvement Measures..... S-3

The heading and last paragraph on page S-2 of the DEIR is revised as follows:

**B. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES**

This EIR provides information on potential impacts of the proposed project on land use and land use planning, aesthetics, population and housing, cultural resources, transportation and circulation, noise, air quality, wind and shadow, recreation, utilities and service systems, public services, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, hazards and hazardous materials, mineral and energy resources, and agricultural resources. This Draft EIR identifies two potentially significant impacts and proposes mitigation measures that reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels, and identifies one improvement measure to further reduce a less-than-significant impact on historic architectural resources, as described below in Table S-1, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation and Improvement Measures, page S-3.

The title of Table S-1 on page S-3 of the DEIR is revised as follows:

**SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES**

The title of Table S-1 on page S-4 of the DEIR is revised as follows:

**SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES**

The following headings and text are added to the bottom of Table S-1 on page S-4 of the DEIR:

<u>Impacts</u>	<u>Impact Significance Without Improvement</u>	<u>Improvement Measures</u>	<u>Impact Significance With Improvement</u>
<u>I-CP-1</u>	<u>LTS</u>	<p><u>Prior to construction, the project sponsor shall provide adequate documentation of the 1661 Pacific Avenue building. The documentation shall be submitted to the City and County of San Francisco Planning Department and found to be adequate prior to authorization of any permit that may be required for alteration of the building. In addition, the project sponsor shall prepare and transmit the photographs and descriptions of the property to the History Room of the San Francisco Public Library.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Images must be fully identified with the name and location of the structure, a description of the feature or view being photographed and the direction in which the photograph was taken, as well as the name of the photographer and the date created.</u></li> <li>• <u>Black and white, 35-millimeter photographs of the interior and exterior of the building using current archival standards. Either digital photographs submitted on CD as well as archival paper, or submitted negatives and 5-by-7 inch print on archival paper, should meet National Register Survey Standards (<a href="http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/policyexpansion.htm">http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/policyexpansion.htm</a>).</u></li> <li>• <u>If there is a historic photo showing the building's context on Pacific Avenue another photo should be taken from the same vantage point and retained and displayed at the new building.</u></li> </ul>	<u>LTS</u>

The second heading on page 60 of the DEIR is revised as follows:

## MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

The following text is added after the first paragraph of page 62:

### IMPROVEMENT MEASURE I-CP-1

Prior to construction, the project sponsor shall provide adequate documentation of the 1661 Pacific Avenue building. The documentation shall be submitted to the City and County of San Francisco Planning Department and found to be adequate prior to authorization of any permit that may be required for alteration of the building. In

addition, the project sponsor shall prepare and transmit the photographs and descriptions of the property to the History Room of the San Francisco Public Library.

- Images must be fully identified with the name and location of the structure, a description of the feature or view being photographed and the direction in which the photograph was taken, as well as the name of the photographer and the date created.
- Black and white, 35-millimeter photographs of the interior and exterior of the building using current archival standards. Either digital photographs submitted on CD as well as archival paper, or submitted negatives and 5-by-7 inch print on archival paper, should meet National Register Survey Standards (<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/policyexpansion.htm>).
- If there is a historic photo showing the building's context on Pacific Avenue another photo should be taken from the same vantage point and retained and displayed at the new building.

## TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

### Traffic

#### Comment #27

"I would like to raise another issue, and that has something to do with what I believe is the ultimate impact of CPMC [the California Pacific Medical Center] and of the changes which are coming up eight blocks down the road in a corridor which also will be served by Pacific Avenue and the new bus impacts on Pacific.

"I have to believe that traffic coming from downtown will use Pacific Avenue as one way to go to CPMC that will be inevitable, and I think that has not been addressed at all. People continue to ignore it. I asked about that in the Sutter Street Project, our Trader Joe's housing project. I have asked it over and over again. I am raising this issue today for this EIR as well.

"Overall, I think the EIR touches on many important issues; however, I would like to see it supplemented by what we heard including my concerns about CPMC." (*Commissioner Moore, oral comments*)

"Lastly, the DEIR includes [no] analysis of the impact of the planned CPMC hospital planned on Van Ness. This project will have monumental impacts on traffic and transportation in the entire neighborhood. We are of the opinion that traffic an[d] transportation analysis that does not include the impact of CPMC is deficient and cannot present conclusive environmental impact findings. CEQA requires the analysis of cumulative impacts." (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

"As a neighbor of the proposed building having lived at 1591 Jackson Street for 19 years, I am very much opposed to the size of this project as the area is already severely congested due to the amount of residential construction that has taken place in this neighborhood. This build-up has brought enough ... traffic pollution without adding 64,170 more sq. feet to an already crowded area.

"In the mere four square blocks from Pacific to Washington and Larkin to Van Ness mixed use low rise structures have been replaced with significantly larger buildings at the following addresses:

"1536 Pacific - four story building now under construction

"1601 Pacific - five story building

"1625 Pacific - five story building

"1650 Jackson - nine story building

"1701 Jackson - nine story building

"1810-12 Polk Street - five story building

"1702 Washington Street - five story building

"1725 Washington Street - five story building

"1800 Washington Street - ten story building

"In addition yet another large development at 1946 Polk (at Pacific) has been proposed which would replace several commercial structures and a much needed parking lot.



“Since these buildings have gone up the traffic ... increase is substantial.” (*Barbara Failing, written comments*)

**Response #27**

The traffic impact analysis for future year 2030 Cumulative conditions is presented on pages 83-85 of the DEIR. Cumulative traffic growth would occur from other developments in the vicinity of the project site (e.g., the proposed CPMC Cathedral Hill Campus and 1946 Pacific Avenue), as well as from the proposed project. Other developments noted in the comments are part of the existing environment, against which the effect of the proposed project was analyzed, as required by CEQA. Future year 2030 Cumulative traffic volumes at the study intersections were based on the San Francisco County Transportation Authority’s travel demand model. Overall, traffic growth at study intersections, between 2008 conditions and 2030 future cumulative conditions, is projected to range between 13 percent at the intersection of Polk/Broadway and 23 percent at the intersection of Polk/Pacific. Some of the vehicular growth could be attributed to trips generated by the proposed CMPC’s Cathedral Hill Campus. As indicated on Table 8 on page 84 of the DEIR, intersections in the vicinity of the proposed project are projected to operate at acceptable levels of service of LOS D or better under 2030 Cumulative conditions. Vehicles destined to the proposed CPMC Cathedral Hill Campus facilities at Van Ness/Geary and would likely use arterial streets closer to the proposed campus such as Van Ness Avenue, Franklin Street, Geary Street, and O’Farrell Street. In addition, Post Street and Sutter Street would likely be more attractive routes than Pacific Avenue for access between the proposed campus and downtown San Francisco.

The CPMC Long Range Development Plan, which includes the proposed Cathedral Hill Campus, is currently under environmental review, and the DEIR (Case No. 2005.0555E) was published on July 21, 2010. It analyzed the intersection of Van Ness and Broadway (the closest intersection to 1645 Pacific), and concluded that intersection will operate satisfactorily after the opening of the Cathedral Hill Campus.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.sf-planning.org/ftp/files/MEA/2005.0555E\\_CPMC\\_DEIR\\_Vol3\\_pt4.pdf](http://www.sf-planning.org/ftp/files/MEA/2005.0555E_CPMC_DEIR_Vol3_pt4.pdf), accessed August 27, 2010.

## Transit

### **Comment #28**

"On page 70, under Muni's Transit Effectiveness Project, the document identifies 'potential changes to occur on mid-2009.' On November 9, 2009, San Francisco Muni implemented substantial revisions to service on specific bus lines covered in the document.

"Updated service changes are as follows:

"The 1-California, the 12-Folsom-Pacific, the 19-Polk, the 27-Bryant, and the 47-Van Ness lines have had segments eliminated, plus frequency and service hours have been reduced.

"Many buses now go downtown and do not go to the Ferry building, which will affect the volume of traffic throughout the city.

"The 10-Townsend has been rerouted along Pacific Avenue and both the 10-Townsend and 12-Folsom-Pacific now provide direct service to the Financial District via Sansome Street. This is a major change.

"Given the revised Muni routes, I would suggest that the DEIR be updated to reflect the cumulative impact of these route and service changes." (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

"My name is Michael Schoolnik. I live at 1569 Clay at Larkin. My comments will be directed at Section 5 of the DEIR, Transportation and Circulation, specifically the areas that address Muni and parking impacts.

"On page 70, under Muni's Transit Effectiveness Project, the document identifies, quote, potential changes to occur on mid 2009, end quote. On November 9th, San Francisco Muni revised service on specific bus lines covered in the documents. Updated service changes are as follows: The One California, the 12 Folsom Pacific, the 19 Polk, the 27 Bryant, and the 47 Van Ness lines have had segments eliminated plus frequency and service hours have been reduced. Many buses now go downtown and do not go to the Ferry Building, which will affect the volume of traffic throughout the City. The 10 Townsend has been rerouted along Pacific Avenue. And both the 10 Townsend and 12 Folsom Pacific now provide direct service to the Financial District via Sansome Street. This is a major change.

"Given the revised Muni routes, I would suggest that the DEIR be updated to reflect the cumulative impact of these route and service changes." (*Michael Schoolnik, oral comments*)

### **Response #28**

As noted in the comments, a number of bus lines in the vicinity of the proposed project have been affected by the recent service changes that resulted from SFMTA's ongoing fiscal emergency. Since the DEIR for the proposed project was published in November 2009, the transit service and ridership data do not reflect the recent changes to Muni service resulting from SFMTA's ongoing fiscal emergency. Ridership data for post-implementation conditions is not currently available for all lines, and transit service is anticipated to return to pre-fiscal emergency levels.

The SFMTA Board held a hearing on April 7, 2009, to consider a declaration of fiscal emergency; on April 21, the SFMTA Board approved Resolution 09-064, in which SFMTA declared that it

found a fiscal emergency existed within the definition of CEQA Section 21080.32. On April 30, the SFMTA Board approved the 2009–2010 amended operating budget and related actions to address the fiscal emergency. On December 5, 2009, Muni service changes associated with the budget deficit were implemented, including those noted by the comments.

The fiscal emergency continued through the beginning of fiscal year 2010. As a result, SFMTA faced a shortfall in its last current fiscal year, which ended on June 30, 2010. The emergency appears to have largely been avoided as of the publication of this document, and 61 percent of the service cuts implemented were restored September 4, 2010.<sup>4</sup> As noted above, transit service is anticipated to eventually return to pre-fiscal emergency levels.

## Parking

### Comment #29

“On page 80 (Parking Impacts) the document cites 48- dwelling units, with 1:1 parking for all units, with the exception of 1 parking space reserved for an independently accessible car-share space. It has been demonstrated and proven that a single [car]-share space never works. There must be two or more car share spaces to make the service work.

“As already stated, the breakdown of the types of residences planned are largely studio units which also have 1: 1 parking. One would assume that these owner residents would be young single first time buyers, making them the most active commuters needing simultaneous egress and ingress in the early morning and late evening commuter hours. The DEIR does not include market research trending for studio residences in San Francisco, that would support demand for 1:1 parking. If an increase in car-share spaces is the growing trend, as I suspect, this would satisfy the City’s initiatives for transit first.

“One-to-one parking would result in 49 cars pulling in and out of the building, which could create significant traffic issues along Pacific. That potential impact isn’t noted in the DEIR and should be further explored.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“On page 80 under ‘Parking Impacts,’ the document cites 48 dwelling units with one-to-one parking for all units, with the exception of one parking space reserved for an independently acceptable car-share space. I would suggest that a single car share space never works. There must be two car share spaces to make the service work; three of course works better; and four spaces works even better than three.

“I’m interested in the breakdown of the types of residences planned and the [lion’s] share being 26 studio units with one-to-one parking. One would assume that these owner residents would be young, single, first-time buyers making them the most active commuters needing simultaneous ingress and egress the early morning and late evening commuter hours. The DEIR does not include market research trending for

<sup>4</sup> San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), *Muni to Restore Service September 4, 2010*. <http://www.sfmta.com/cms/malerts/MunitoRestoreServiceSeptember42010.htm>. Accessed September 1, 2010.

studio residences in San Francisco that would support the demand for one-to-one parking. If an increase in car share spaces is the growing trend, as I suspect, that would satisfy the City's initiatives for transit first.

"Lastly, one-to-one parking would result in 49 cars pulling in and out of the building which would create significant traffic issues along Pacific. That potential impact isn't in the DEIR, and I would suggest it be an issue to explore." (*Michael Schoolnik, oral comments*)

"You need at least 15 more parking spaces for tenants. That area is already too difficult to find parking on the street. 15 units will house 2-3 people. They will need parking too.

"Don't think that they will not buy/have cars, just because there are no spaces.

"Build more parking spaces. This should be the case for all new condo/apt developments" (*Elizabeth Shaw, written comments*)

#### "9) Existing Use as a Public Parking Garage

"No study was made about the specific and cumulative loss of the public parking that supports neighborhood residents and retail" (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

#### **Response #29**

Existing parking conditions are presented in the DEIR on page 72. The discussion of the significance threshold for parking impacts is on pages 75-76 of the DEIR. San Francisco does not consider parking supply as part of the permanent physical environment and therefore does not consider changes in parking conditions to be environmental impacts as defined by CEQA. The San Francisco Planning Department acknowledges, however, that parking conditions may be of interest to the public and the decision-makers. Therefore, a parking analysis for the proposed project is presented for information purposes.

Parking conditions are not static, as parking supply and demand varies from day to day, from day to night, from month to month, etc. Hence, the availability of parking spaces (or lack thereof) is not a permanent physical condition, but changes over time as people change their modes and patterns of travel.

Parking deficits are considered to be social effects, rather than impacts on the physical environment as defined by CEQA. Under CEQA, a project's social impacts need not be treated as significant impacts on the environment. Environmental documents should, however, address the secondary physical impacts that could be triggered by a social impact (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15131(a)). The social inconvenience of parking deficits, such as having to hunt for scarce parking spaces, is not an environmental impact, but there may be secondary physical environmental

impacts, such as increased traffic congestion at intersections, air quality impacts, safety impacts, noise impacts caused by congestion, or transit impacts associated with a shift in mode. In the experience of San Francisco transportation planners, however, the absence of a ready supply of parking spaces, combined with available alternatives to auto travel (e.g., transit service, taxis, bicycles or travel by foot) and a relatively dense pattern of urban development, induces many drivers to seek and find alternative parking facilities, shift to other modes of travel, or change their overall travel habits. Any such resulting shifts to transit service in particular would be in keeping with the City's "Transit First" policy. The City's Transit First Policy, established in the City's Charter Article 8A, Section 8A.115, provides that "parking policies for areas well served by public transit shall be designed to encourage travel by public transportation and alternative transportation."

The parking impact assessment is on pages 80-81 of the DEIR. The 48 off-street residential parking spaces included as part of the project would meet the *Planning Code's* minimum requirement of one space per residential unit. The 48-unit project would consist of 26 studios, 7 one-bedroom units, 12 two-bedroom units, and 3 three-bedroom units. CEQA does not require market research to justify the *Planning Code* parking requirements for the project, which are one parking space per residential unit, regardless of unit type (e.g., studio, one-bedroom, etc) or size. The DEIR discussion states that the *Planning Code* contains no off-street parking requirement for retail uses with less than 5,000 square feet (the project proposes 3,410 square feet) or for car-share spaces because there would be fewer than 50 units. The project sponsor would voluntarily provide one car-share space. Comments regarding the practicability of single car-share parking spaces do not provide any specific analysis. There are numerous single-space car-share facilities in San Francisco.

The DEIR states that the overall current parking occupancy rate is about 91 percent and that if the residential and retail shortfall of between nine and 20 spaces were to be accommodated on street, the midday parking occupancy rate in the parking study area would increase from 91 percent to 92 percent.

The traffic and circulation impacts of the proposed project, including egress and ingress of cars occupying the off-street parking spaces, is presented on pages 78-79 of the DEIR. The assessment states that the addition of the project's 10 peak-hour (p.m.) vehicle trips would not change existing LOS at Pacific Avenue/Polk Street and Pacific Avenue/Van Ness Avenue intersections.

C. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

The discussion also notes that the 39 new transit trips during the p.m. peak hour would be accommodated within existing capacity (less than 85 percent at maximum peak load points) without substantially affecting transit operations.

## NOISE

### Comment #30

“As a neighbor of the proposed building having lived at 1591 Jackson Street for 19 years, I am very much opposed to the size of this project as the area is already severely congested due to the amount of residential construction that has taken place in this neighborhood. This build-up has brought enough ... noise ... pollution without adding 64,170 more sq. feet to an already crowded area.

“In the mere four square blocks from Pacific to Washington and Larkin to Van Ness mixed use low rise structures have been replaced with significantly larger buildings at the following addresses:

“1536 Pacific - four story building now under construction

“1601 Pacific - five story building

“1625 Pacific - five story building

“1650 Jackson - nine story building

“1701 Jackson - nine story building

“1810-12 Polk Street - five story building

“1702 Washington Street - five story building

“1725 Washington Street - five story building

“1800 Washington Street - ten story building

“In addition yet another large development at 1946 Polk (at Pacific) has been proposed which would replace several commercial structures and a much needed parking lot.

“Since these buildings have gone up the ... noise increase is substantial.” (*Barbara Failing, written comments*)

“3) Specific Noise Impacts.

“The noise impacts were not adequately studied and not mitigation measures were addressed to resolve the cumulative impacts on the neighborhood. Three specific problems not included and need studied, measured, and mitigated:

“a. trash pick-ups due to the large number of new large buildings in the neighborhood—from 4 AM on the noise levels are repeated and at a volume to wake hundreds of people every 10 to 15 minutes from 4 am on. Building heights tend to multiply the sounds affect on the neighborhood increasing its levels.

“b. City police are now using Polk street as their through street (caused in part the cumulative effects of traffic caused by the over building of the neighborhood making Van Ness work poorly for them). The affect is sirens all night long on Poll Street and their awful impacts.

“c. Police, fire department, and ambulance calls and sirens 24/7 have directly increased with the cumulative impact of the housing built and proposed in the neighborhood.

“Over the past ten years, the following developments have been built within two blocks of this proposed project and contribute to the increased noise:

- “• Van Ness between Washington and Jackson (middle of the block). Two tall towers with 100 to 200 condos replaced a two-story motel.

- “• Polk and Pacific (southwest comer), A 5-story apartment building replaced a car repair facility.
- “• Polk between Washington and Jackson (next to our building). A 4-story condo building replaced a 1-story building that had two businesses.
- “• Polk and Pacific (southeast comer). A proposed 5-story, multi-unit condo building will replace two one-story buildings and a parking lot.
- “• Polk and Washington (southwest comer). A 5-story apartment or condo building was constructed several years ago, but I can’t remember what was there before,
- “• Pacific between Polk and Larkin (middle of block). A small 3- or 4-story apartment or condo building is being proposed.

“It’s obvious that in recent years the neighborhood density has doubled (the number of people who lived within these four-square blocks live here now), with all the impacts that has caused. Please study, measure and mitigate those impacts before 48 more units to this already[.]” (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #30**

The noise generated by existing and proposed buildings in the project vicinity, including the existing buildings mentioned in the comment, is not attributable to the proposed project, and are considered existing conditions. Environmental analysis under CEQA analyzes the potential project impacts in comparison to existing conditions. The sources of noise noted in the comments are all existing episodic ambient noise, not additional noise associated with the proposed project.

On pages 89-92, the DEIR assessment covers project noise impacts from construction, existing ambient noise, traffic, and building systems. The mitigation measure for conflicts with existing ambient noise levels is building insulation, including multiple-pane energy efficient and sound-limiting windows. Cumulative noise impacts are assessed on pages 92-93 of the DEIR.

As noted in the DEIR in pages 83 and 84, cumulative traffic growth would occur from other developments in the vicinity of the project site (e.g., 1946 Pacific Avenue), as well as from the proposed project. Other developments noted in the comments are part of the existing environment, against which the effect of the proposed project was analyzed, as required by CEQA. Overall, traffic growth at study intersections, between 2008 conditions and 2030 future cumulative conditions, is projected to range between 13 and 23 percent at intersections in the site vicinity, less than the doubling of traffic volume over existing conditions that needs to occur before the attendant increase in ambient noise is noticeable to most people.

The DEIR, pages 92-93 states “These projects, in combination with the proposed project, could incrementally contribute to cumulative noise impacts in the project vicinity. However, ... the



proposed project would have less-than-significant project-specific noise impacts, and the other projects would also be subject to CEQA and City requirements for mitigation of noise impacts and are not anticipated to substantially increase noise in the project vicinity. For these reasons, the proposed and recently approved projects would not result in cumulative noise impacts, and the proposed project could not make a considerable contribution to any cumulative noise impact.”

## AIR QUALITY

### **Comment #31**

"1) Parking Exhaust Gases.

"On the parking plan inside the building, now in the basement, we are concerned about idling and maneuvering cars—and the pollution they create:

"a. on the persons in the garage,

"b. in the commercial spaces,

"c. in the 1st floor residential spaces,

"d. in the backyards,

"e. and on the air quality to the buildings of similar height directly adjacent to the property." (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

### **Response #31**

The air quality analysis is presented on pages 94-120 of the DEIR and covers existing conditions and the proposed project's impacts (project-specific and cumulative) for the following topics: applicable regulations and management programs, construction, operations, roadway-related toxic air contaminants, greenhouse gas emissions, and odors. The microenvironments listed in the comment are not identified in the list of significance thresholds on page 109 and the impact analysis. Pursuant to the standards of the San Francisco *Building Code*, the design of buildings and indoor parking garages includes airflow, air filtering devices, and building insulation that prevent exhaust emissions from concentrating at the locations listed in Comment #59 to the point where they would pose a health impact. The project would be required to comply with these standards to obtain a building permit; therefore, these aspects of building and garage construction would be regulated by the Department of Building Inspection and the San Francisco *Building Code*.

## WIND AND SHADOW

### Comment #32

“Again, what is not before us, but it will be during the CU hearing is certainly an analysis of whether the height is appropriate, the bulk is appropriate, whether the views are blocked. I think the shadows on streets are somewhat different than shadows on parks, but it might certainly be an issue that we have to consider in our consideration for the CU.” (*Commissioner Antonini, oral comments*)

“The DEIR states that the proposed project has no significant impacts on wind and shadows. Although shadows will not be cast on parkland, in the Polk NCD the streets are the useable open space. The neighborhood is full of cafes and restaurants that take advantage of the sunny streets for outdoor seating. On any clear day you will find people in this neighborhood taking advantage of the sunlight.

“The proposed project will impact the potential outdoor use on Pacific Avenue. An outdoor eating area already exists towards the Polk Street corner and the possibility of café seating as part of the Fire House renovation has been proposed. The shadow study illustrates the impact on four days of the year. The project shadows will impact outdoor use in the late fall and early spring. We have looked at the shadows and reducing the project height to 50 feet would eliminate the shadow impacts of the project to the north side of Pacific, greatly increasing public access to sunlight.

“Prop K protects certain public open spaces from shadows due to new development. In our area, we have only one park. Instead, our residents use the streets as our civic public spaces. The DEIR misrepresents the impact of this project on the neighborhood as it relates to shadows.

“The current proposal involves a large 6 story building erected on the south side of a relatively small street—Pacific Avenue. This development will loom over the northern side of the street which is composed of a full block of 2 story commercial.

“The project sponsor has provided results of a shadow impact at 4 specific points through a calendar year. With the exception of December, all impact study reflects that there will conveniently be no shadow that goes beyond the parked cars across the street. We feel this study inadequately addresses reality. The proposed structure is certain to block far more sunlight than stated, particularly during the winter months.

“Despite the proposed building being three times the size of the current structure, it is inconceivable that there are not more severe shadow effects. If built, 1645 [Pacific] will be the largest development—in height and lot size—on the block. Yet, the shadow study included in the DEIR greatly diminishes the actual effect that the shadow of this building will create. When you take into account the cornices and mechanical penthouse, the proposed project could have impacts (visual, shadow, view obstruction, wind) equivalent to a 7-story building.

“This is especially important for the future use of the Old Firehouse directly across the street. Recently approved by the Planning Commission, this structure will have outside seating and would be particularly sun sensitive.

“The shadow study reflected in the DEIR is not accurate and inadequate. A more thorough analysis should be done in order to better understand the drastic effects this development will have on the streetscape.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“One other illustration is right across the street this is the original firehouse. There’s a firehouse there now which will be shadowed by the project. This is a building, a stables very similar to the original stables with the downfall over the street, and there’s a cable car house right there.” (*James Joannides, oral comments*)

“An 81’ building would skew the entire character of that block and create huge shadows for the neighbors on the opposite side of the street. The shadow study did not take into consideration the winter months when the shadows would be the longest and shade the neighboring northside businesses.

“We believe that the shadow study along with many other discrepancies and inaccuracies makes this DEIR inadequate. A more thorough analysis should be done in order to better understand the drastic effects this development will have on the streetscape.” (*Bill and Diane Carroll, written comments*)

“I am Diane Carol. I live at 1650 Jackson. I’m going to speak about shadow impact from the DEIR. Prop K protects certain public open spaces from shadows due to new development. In our area, we have only one park. Instead our [residents] use the streets as our civil public spaces. The DEIR misrepresents the impact of this project on a neighborhood as it relates to shadows.

“The current proposal involves a large six-story building erected on the south side of a relatively small street, Pacific Avenue. This development will loom over the northern side of the street which is composed of a full block of two-story commercial buildings including a steakhouse, a gym, and redeveloped historical firehouse, a hotel, small businesses, and finally the cheese store.

“The project sponsor has provided results of a shadow impact at four specific points through a calendar year. With the exception of December, all the impact study reflects is that there will conveniently be no shadow that goes beyond the parked cars across the street.

“We feel this study inadequately addresses reality. The proposed structure is certain to block far more sunlight than stated, particularly during the winter months.

“Despite the proposed building being nearly three times the size of the current structure, it is inconceivable that there are not more severe shadow effects. If built, 1645 will be the largest development in height and [lot] size on the block, and I believe the shadow study included in the DEIR greatly diminishes the actual effect that the shadow of this building will create.

“When you take into account the [inaudible] and mechanical penthouses the proposed project could have impact[s]—visual, shadow, view objections, wind equivalent to a seven-story building.

“We all intuitively know the benefits that open space and light has on the pedestrian experience and commercial vitality. While the proposed development includes its own commercial space, there’s a vibrant and active commercial stretch across the street that should be taken into account. The size of the proposed structure speaks for itself. There will be considerable impact on neighboring dwelling units, open space, yards, surrounding areas, and the general climate around the project.

“This is especially important for the future use of the old firehouse directly across the street recently approved by the planning commission. This structure will have outside seating and would be particularly sun sensitive.

“In closing, we believe the shadow study reflected in the DEIR is not accurate and is inadequate.” (*Diane Carol, oral comments*)

**Response #32**

Under San Francisco's environmental review process, a project's shadows on parks and other public spaces under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Commission must be evaluated, pursuant to *Planning Code* Section 295. It should be noted that CEQA does not restrict shading of private property. Section 295 of the *Planning Code* was adopted in response to Proposition K (passed November 1984) in order to protect certain public open spaces from shadowing by new structures during the period between one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset, year round. *Planning Code* Section 295 restricts net new shadow on public open spaces under the jurisdiction of, or to be acquired by the Recreation and Park Department, by any structure exceeding 40 feet, unless the Planning Commission, in consultation with the Recreation and Park Commission, finds the impact to be less than significant.

As noted in Table 1, page 25 of the DEIR, the height of the proposed building is 65 feet, excluding the elevator and stair penthouses. For the purpose of determining compliance with the 65-foot height limit that applies to the proposed project, up to 10 feet for stair penthouses and 16 feet of elevator penthouses are excluded per Section 260(b)(1)(A) of the *Planning Code*. The height of the proposed building at the top of the elevator penthouse would be 81 feet. The evaluations of visual quality, wind, and shadow effects of the project, presented in Sections V.B and V.H of the DEIR, respectively, accounted for the entire building as proposed, including mechanical penthouses.

Pages 126 to 133 of the DEIR summarize the shadow study that was performed for the proposed project. The shadow study evaluated shadows in the four seasons of the year, including the winter solstice, December 20<sup>th</sup>, when the sun would be at its lowest elevation, as discussed on page 126 and shown on Figure 25, page 131 of the DEIR. The shadow study was conducted by a qualified independent consultant in accordance with currently accepted methodology, and was reviewed and approved by Planning Department staff. As discussed on page 132 of the DEIR, the project would not cast shadows on the nearest public open space, Helen Wills Playground. The shadow study found that the project would shade portions of nearby sidewalks and buildings at times, including the Engine Co. No. 8, Truck Co. No. 4 building at 1648 Pacific Avenue (site of a potential future sidewalk café) during the winter. While a lower building at the site may cast fewer shadows, the new shadows created by the proposed project would not constitute a significant impact under CEQA that would be subject to additional analysis and/or mitigation.

C. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

This shadow study is sufficient to inform decision makers and the public about the physical environmental effects and consequences of a proposed project on shadows, and additional analysis is not required.

It is not possible to respond more specifically to the comment regarding “many other discrepancies and inaccuracies” without further explanation. The DEIR evaluates all potential impacts of the project in compliance with CEQA, at a level of detail sufficient to inform decision makers and the public about the physical environmental effects and consequences of a proposed project.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

### Comment #33

"11) Recycling

"No study was made of the location and easy resident use for all the recycling requirements imposed and proposed by the City for batteries, cardboard, cans, wet waste, etc." (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

### Response #33

As shown on Figure 11, page 21 of the DEIR, the basement of the proposed project would include a trash room with space for containers for solid waste and recyclable materials, which would enable the proposed project to comply with City requirements for recycling materials such as cardboard, cans, and food waste. Household hazardous waste such as batteries must be collected separately for environmentally appropriate disposal. The volume of household hazardous waste typically stored by an individual household is relatively small and can be accommodated within the dwelling units of the proposed project. Additional detail on the project's provision for recycling containers is not required to inform decision makers and the public about the physical environmental effects and consequences of a proposed project in compliance with CEQA.

## ALTERNATIVES

### Comment #34

“After discussion, [Commissioner Diane Matusda] arrived at the following [comment]:

- “• The Commissioner would like to see another EIR Alternative proposed or at least considered around the subject of historic resources.” (*Historic Preservation Commission, hearing minutes*)

“The Historic Preservation Commission last week was disappointed that there weren’t illustrations. I have something here, and there was a poverty of them and then there wasn’t a—there was a lack of reasonable alternatives to [CEQA] mentioned, such as smaller—they talked specifically about smaller basins over the little building and perhaps bringing the other building down a story so that it wouldn’t shadow the building across the street and would be on the same height as the two contemporary buildings right next to it.” (*James Joannides, oral comments*)

### Response #34

CEQA requires that alternatives evaluated in an EIR avoid or substantially lessen one or more significant environmental effects identified for the proposed project (*CEQA Guidelines* Section 15126.6(a)). No significant project impacts related to historical resources or to the project’s size were identified in the DEIR; hence, an alternative or alternatives that reduces impacts on historical resources or the size of the proposed project is not required. Nevertheless, the DEIR evaluates a Preservation Alternative that would demolish the 1645 Pacific Avenue building but retain the historically significant 1661 Pacific Avenue building in its entirety without a vertical addition, which would therefore lessen the proposed project’s less-than-significant impacts on historical resources, and other less-than-significant impacts related to building size.

As discussed in V.D. Cultural Resources, page 52 of the DEIR, the Planning Department has determined that, while modified structurally, the subject building retains the character-defining features that allow it to convey its significance—massing, scale, roofline, and street elevation. Because the proposed project would preserve these features, it is equivalent to a Partial Preservation Alternative. (It should be noted that the original project proposal was to demolish both 1645 Pacific and 1661 Pacific in their entireties, and the project sponsor modified the project in response to the Planning Department’s determination that 1661 Pacific is an historic resource. Please see Figure C&R.3.)



The DEIR also considers the No-Project Alternative, which would preserve the historic resource at 1661 Pacific Avenue, on the project site, in its present condition.

No other reasonable alternatives relating to historic resources, other than those discussed above, are available. For this reason, and because the DEIR evaluates a reasonable range of alternatives, analysis of additional alternatives is not required.

*CEQA Guidelines* 15126.6(b) (Consideration and Discussion of Alternatives to the Proposed Project) requires enough information for a meaningful analysis and comparison with the proposed project, but does not require as much detail as presented or analyzed for the approval/disapproval determination of the proposed project; therefore, illustrations of alternatives is not required in EIRs.

**Comment #35**

“The evaluation of alternatives in the DEIR is weighted towards the proposed project minimizing positive aspects of the proposed Preservation Alternative.

“The DEIR states: ‘the Preservation alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative due to its reduced impact on historic architectural resources, and approximately 20 percent reduction in trip generation and related traffic and air quality impacts compared to the proposed project.’

“But also the impact on neighborhood character is minimized by reducing the bulk of the proposed structure. The proposed project is seeking bulk exceptions and while still overly tall for the context, the reduced length would mitigate the dominating mass of the project to Pacific Avenue. In addition, the character of the historic garage would not be compromised by the added mass above it.

“CEQA Section 15126.2 Consideration and Discussion of Alternatives to the Proposed Project

“(a) Alternatives to the Proposed Project. An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives ...

“(f) Rule of reason. The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a “rule of reason” that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The alternatives should be limited to those necessary to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project ... The range of feasible alternatives shall be selected and discussed in a manner to foster meaningful public participation and informed decision making.’

“Based on the CEQA sections above, we request that an additional alternative be developed and included in the DEIR. This alternative would be designed to eliminate obstruction of the view of Nob Hill from Pacific and Franklin, minimize shading of Pacific Avenue, and be more in keeping with the street scale and the adjacent buildings.” (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

“The San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission 12/2/2009 minutes state:

“Commissioner Hasz: Maybe there could be more than one preservation alternative.’

“We would however support the mitigation in this matter for an enhanced preservation alternative as environmentally superior to the proposed application in this matter.” (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #35**

CEQA requires that alternatives considered in an EIR be ones that would avoid or substantially reduce one or more significant impacts identified for the proposed project. No significant impacts of the proposed project on views, shadows, or land use character were identified, as discussed on page 40, pages 126-133, and page 36 of the DEIR, respectively. For this reason, evaluation of an alternative that would reduce project effects on views, shadows, and land use character is not required by CEQA.

As statements of opposition to the proposed project, or as statements in favor of other values, the comments will be transmitted to the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document, and will be considered by that body prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

## OTHER

### Comment #36

"We oppose the granting of any entitlements for this project. We also believe the EIR failed to adequately study the project and evaluate the scope of negative impacts that 1645 Pacific will have on the Polk/Pacific neighborhood." (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

### Response #36

The DEIR evaluates all potential impacts of the project in compliance with CEQA, at a level of detail sufficient to inform decision makers and the public about the physical environmental effects and consequences of a proposed project. The DEIR found that, with implementation of mitigation measures identified in the DEIR, all project impacts can be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

As statements of opposition to the proposed project, or as statements in favor of other values, the comments will be transmitted to the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document, and will be considered by that body prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

### Comment #37

"We suggest that [the five-story addition to 1661 Pacific Avenue] be severely reduced in height or eliminated as shown in partial preservation alternative. We suggest that the entire building be reduced in height and that deep setbacks be introduced to mitigate the shear wall effect on Pacific. The 1946 Polk Street project, frequently cited as an example to be emulated in this DEIR, was altered to a five-floor building with fifth floor setbacks of 12 feet by the project sponsor to harmonize with the character and scale of the neighborhood. See Exhibit 2 attached [to comment letter in Appendix 1 of this document]." (*Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, written comments*)

"I am not opposed to development however it needs to be appropriately scaled. Therefore, I am asking that the Commission reconsider the size of 1645 Pacific project. If you must approve it, do it for a smaller building with a lesser number of units. I know that the developers want to maximize their profit; but it is being made at the expense of those who have lived and wish to continue living in this neighborhood. After all, the developers will not be residing here but we will." (*Barbara Failing, written comments*)

**Response #37**

CEQA requires that alternatives considered in an EIR be ones that would avoid or substantially reduce one or more significant impacts identified for the proposed project. No significant impacts of the proposed project were identified. For this reason, evaluation of alternatives that would reduce project effects is not required by CEQA. Nevertheless, the EIR did analyze a range of alternatives. Therefore, analysis of additional alternatives is not required.

As statements of opposition to the proposed project, or as statements in favor of other values, the comments will be transmitted to the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document, and will be considered by that body prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

**Comment #38**

"4) Finding:

"The Public Notice [of] Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Report for 1645 Pacific Avenue Project Planning Department Case No. 2007.0519E State Clearinghouse No. 2008102012 is undated so we are unable to verify if it was posted and delivered under legal minimums required under the CEQA and City time requirements." (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #38**

The notice of intent to adopt and availability of the DEIR for the proposed project was posted in accordance with the requirements of CEQA and the San Francisco Planning Department on November 18, 2009, and an affidavit was filed, as documented in the "Declaration of Posting for Environmental Document" dated January 25, 2010. This affidavit is available for public review at the Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, California, as a part of Case No. 2007.0519E.

**Comment #39**

"We request that the DEIR not be certified and that it be sent back for additional study and mitigation." (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #39**

The DEIR evaluates all potential impacts of the project in compliance with CEQA, and is sufficient to inform decision makers and the public about the physical environmental effects and

consequences of a proposed project. The DEIR found that, with implementation of mitigation measures identified in the DEIR, all project impacts can be reduced to a less-than-significant level. No additional environmental analysis or mitigation is required.

The comments will be transmitted to the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document and will be considered by that body in their determination whether to certify the EIR for the proposed project.

**Comment #40**

“Good afternoon, President Miguel and Commissioners. Happy holidays to all of you. My name is Dawn Trennert. I’m with the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association. My address is 1561 Sacramento Street, Number 4109.

“I speak to you today regarding this DEIR specifically regarding about the timing of this DEIR. It came out on November 18th right before the Thanksgiving holiday. I don’t know about you all but I was pretty busy around the Thanksgiving. And coming here to the Historical Preservation Commission last week and coming here today has been a bit difficult in pulling things together, but I think you will see that we have done a good job at that.

“I am really concerned that the final deadline for written comments is on January 2nd, literally the day after the holidays. I think that puts undue stress on the public and on everybody who is interested in this project in having to rush to get something in. I would prefer that we have a little bit more time so that we could do a quality job in providing comments, and I would ask for an extension of that deadline.” (*Dawn Trennert, Middle Polk Neighborhood Association, oral comments*)

**Response #40**

The 45-day comment period for the DEIR, was extended from November 18, 2009 through January 19, 2010, which is longer than the 45 days required by CEQA.

**Comment #41**

“5) Comments and Questions about the DEIR and notice:

“We would like to remind the commission that since a discretionary act is involved this project can be denied. The [City’s] tendency is to forget the power granted it by the people to exercise [its] full range of powers and instead tends to only use [its] powers that keep entitlement projects moving forward, regardless of neighborhood concern.

“From the original DEIR notice:

“‘The project sponsor would request approval by the Planning Commission of a Conditional Use authorization for development on lots greater than 10,000 square feet (*Planning Code* Section 121.1) and an exception from the bulk requirements (Section 271).’

“We interpret that to mean the plan as submitted can be denied. Is this the understanding of the Staff and Commission as it applies to this project? Beside 3 pages in the DEIR (which do not study the ‘no project

alternative' at all) are we [to] assume that since only 3 pages out of 268 pages in the DEIR, about 1%, that the no-alternative—by design and study, has only a 1% chance of occurring. That none of the no-alternative benefits were studied. Does this meet the requirements in time and study for City and CEQA study for this project?

“Does approval of this project mean that that staff and Commission have reviewed and studied the effects of the no-alternative project? Or has the City failed to even develop some standards for measuring the no-alternative project?” (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #41**

In compliance with CEQA, the DEIR compares the potential impacts of the No-Project Alternative, on pages 171-174, to the potential impacts of the proposed project, at a level of detail sufficient to inform decision makers and the public about the physical environmental effects and consequences of this alternative. As stated in the DEIR on page 171, if the No-Project Alternative were implemented, none of the effects of the proposed project would occur. If the Planning Commission selected this alternative, and a different development proposal were submitted at a later date, that proposal would be subject to a separate project-specific CEQA environmental review.

As discussed on page 35 of the DEIR, the project is consistent with the applicable 65-foot height limit of the 65-A Height and Bulk District, which allows a maximum length of 110 feet and a maximum diagonal dimension of 125 feet above 40 feet in height. As noted in Response #16, the proposed project would have a maximum linear dimension of 124 feet and a maximum diagonal dimension of 158 feet, which would exceed the bulk limits, and for which the project sponsor would request approval by the Planning Commission of a Conditional Use Authorization for an exception from the bulk requirements, pursuant to *Planning Code* Section 271. Conditional Use authorization is also required because the project site exceeds 10,000 sq.ft. in size. The findings necessary to grant the bulk exception and approve development on a large lot must be made by the Planning Commission, which will balance the environmental, economic, or social benefits of the proposed project against any adverse environmental, economic, or social consequences. This balancing does not take place as part of the EIR analysis. Rather, it would be carried out as part of the decision makers' determination whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives. The Planning Commission's decision on the project and alternatives is determined by their environmental, economic and social attributes, rather than by the proportion of the DEIR that is devoted to evaluation each of the alternatives.

The comments regarding the City's discretionary powers to deny the project are not comments on the scope and adequacy of the DEIR. As statements of opposition to the proposed project, or as statements in favor of other values, the comments will be transmitted to the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document, and will be considered by that body prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the proposed project or one of the project alternatives.

**Comment #42**

"7) Is the project we are responding to the actual project

"In the Applicants application to the SFHAC Endorsement Application (copy attached [to comment letter in Appendix 1 of this document]) they stated the building has been re-designed as of October, 2009. How do those revisions affect the DEIR? Is the project we are responding to the actual project?

"13) The project in the NOP differs significantly from the project as described in the DEIR.

"Could you please provide a list of differences between the two projects and what impact that has on the approval and public notification processes? (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #42**

The comment refers to an earlier design that was submitted to the Planning Department, detailed in Response #16 and Figure C&R.2. The design was changed prior to publication of the NOP. As shown in Table 1, page 25 of the DEIR, and Table 1 of the Notice of Preparation, page 5 of Appendix A of the DEIR, the project described in the DEIR does not differ from that described in the Notice of Preparation (NOP); both descriptions have the same total square feet, retail square feet, residential square feet, parking square feet, square feet of open space, number of dwelling units, number of parking spaces, number of stories, and building height. There has been no change to the project since the DEIR was circulated. Thus, there have been no changes to the project description that could affect the distribution and approval process.

**Comment #43**

"In a city that has approved about 1000-2000+ residential units a year in the boom times of the 2000's this project should not be evaluated as little impact on this neighborhood when it could be as much as 5% of all units approved in the City this year. Growth is not 'inevitable' nor is it good for neighborhood and communities. The DEIR has not identified a single benefit this project brings to this neighborhood. It slights neighborhood concerns about [its] impacts. It moves forward a process granting substantial entitlements to a single person while depriving many of any action on their behalf." (*Mark Whisler, written comments*)

**Response #43**

As discussed on page 51 of the DEIR, the proposed project would add to San Francisco's housing supply and meet some of the existing demand for housing but, considered within the context of year 2030 housing projections, would not be considered a significant addition to the projected residential housing stock in the City as a whole. The proposed project's 48 residential units would not make a substantial contribution to cumulative impacts. The DEIR evaluates all potential impacts of the project in compliance with CEQA, at a level of detail sufficient to inform decision makers and the public about the physical environmental effects and consequences of a proposed project. The DEIR found that, with implementation of mitigation measures identified in the DEIR, all project impacts can be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

The comments regarding granting of entitlements do not pertain to physical environmental issues, and do not affect the environmental impact analysis or conclusions. As statements of opposition to the proposed project, or as statements in favor of other values, the comments will be transmitted to the decision maker (the Planning Commission), as part of this Comments and Responses document and will be considered by that body in their determination whether to certify the EIR for the proposed project. That decision will balance the environmental, economic, or social benefits of the proposed project against any adverse environmental, economic, or social consequences.



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## D. DEIR REVISIONS

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Below are revisions to the DEIR. Revisions have been made in response to public comments that have been made on the DEIR, as well as those initiated by Planning Department staff. Changes made in response to comments are listed in Section 1 below; staff-initiated changes are listed in Section 2 below. Deletions to the DEIR text are shown with ~~strike through~~ and additions are shown with double underline, except where text is indicated as entirely new in order to allow for ease of reading.

### 1. CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

The Table of Contents, page i of the DEIR, is revised as follows:

B. Summary of Impacts and Mitigation and Improvement Measures..... S-2

The Table of Contents, page ii of the DEIR, is revised as follows:

Table S-1 Summary of Impacts and Mitigation and Improvement Measures ..... S-3

Page S-1, third paragraph, first sentence is changed as follows:

The 1645 Pacific Avenue project site is in San Francisco's ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill neighborhood on the south side of Pacific Avenue between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street (Assessor's Block 0595, Lot 013).

The heading and last paragraph on page S-2 of the DEIR is revised as follows:

**B. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES**

This EIR provides information on potential impacts of the proposed project on land use and land use planning, aesthetics, population and housing, cultural resources, transportation and circulation, noise, air quality, wind and shadow, recreation, utilities and service systems, public services, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, hazards and hazardous materials, mineral and energy resources, and agricultural resources. This DEIR identifies two potentially significant impacts and proposes mitigation measures that reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels, and identifies one improvement measure to further reduce a less-than-significant impact on historic architectural resources, as described below in Table S-1, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation and Improvement Measures, page S-3.

The heading and last paragraph on page S-2 of the DEIR is revised as follows:

**B. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES**

This EIR provides information on potential impacts of the proposed project on land use and land use planning, aesthetics, population and housing, cultural resources, transportation and circulation, noise, air quality, wind and shadow, recreation, utilities and service systems, public services, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, hazards and hazardous materials, mineral and energy resources, and agricultural resources. This Draft EIR identifies two potentially significant impacts and proposes mitigation measures that reduce these impacts to less-than-significant levels, and identifies one improvement measure to further reduce a less-than-significant impact on historic architectural resources, as described below in Table S-1, Summary of Impacts and Mitigation and Improvement Measures, page S-3.

The title of Table S-1 on page S-3 of the DEIR is revised as follows:

**SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES**

The title of Table S-1 on page S-4 of the DEIR is revised as follows:

**SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES**

The following headings and text are added to the bottom of Table S-1 on page S-4 of the DEIR:

<u>Impacts</u>	<u>Impact Significance Without Improvement</u>	<u>Improvement Measures</u>	<u>Impact Significance With Improvement</u>
<u>I-CP-1</u>	<u>LTS</u>	<p><u>Prior to construction, the project sponsor shall provide adequate documentation of the 1661 Pacific Avenue building. The documentation shall be submitted to the City and County of San Francisco Planning Department and found to be adequate prior to authorization of any permit that may be required for demolition of the building. In addition, the project sponsor shall prepare and transmit the photographs and descriptions of the property to the History Room of the San Francisco Public Library.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Images must be fully identified with the name and location of the structure, a description of the feature or view being photographed and the direction in which the photograph was taken, as well as the name of the photographer and the date created.</u></li> <li>• <u>Black and white, 35-millimeter photographs of the interior and exterior of the building using current archival standards. Either digital photographs submitted on CD as well as archival paper, or submitted negatives and 5-by-7 inch print on archival paper, should meet National Register Survey Standards (<a href="http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/policyexpansion.htm">http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/policyexpansion.htm</a>).</u></li> <li>• <u>If there is a historic photo showing the building's context on Pacific Avenue another photo should be taken from the same vantage point and retained and displayed at the new building.</u></li> </ul>	<u>LTS</u>

Page S-5, fourth paragraph is changed as follows:

The No Project Alternative would not meet the objectives of the project sponsor to construct a mixed-use residential-retail building and associated parking in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area.

Page S-8, second paragraph, the sentence is changed as follows:

The Preservation Alternative would partially meet the project sponsor's objectives to construct a high-quality, cost-effective mixed-use residential-retail building and associated parking in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area because this alternative's building would be approximately 20 percent smaller than the proposed project.

Page 7, the first bullet item is changed as follows:

In response to San Francisco's housing demand and the need for neighborhood retail space, construct a high-quality, cost-effective, mixed-use residential-retail building and associated parking in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area.

Page 8, first paragraph, the first sentence is changed as follows:

The rectangular 15,959-square-foot (sq.ft.) project site is located on the south side of Pacific Avenue between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street (Assessor's Block 0595, Lot 013) in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area of San Francisco.

Page 32, second paragraph, third sentence is changed as follows:

A ~~five-six~~-story, 38-unit residential building was recently approved for the property currently occupied by a one- to two-story retail building and surface parking area at 1932-1946 Polk Street and 1567-1575 Pacific Avenue, respectively, on the southeast corner of Pacific Avenue and Polk Street, one-half block east of the project site.

Page 36, first paragraph, second sentence is changed as follows:

In the project vicinity, a ~~five-six~~-story building with 38 residential units and 2,900 sq.ft. of retail space was recently approved at the southeast corner of Pacific Avenue and Polk Street (1946 Polk Street), a seven-story building with 34 residential units was recently approved on the north side of Broadway between Van Ness Avenue and Franklin Street (1650 Broadway), and several other small residential projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the Russian Hill area have also been approved or are currently under review.

Page 37, the first sentence is changed as follows:

The proposed project would add to the intensity of land use within the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill and Van Ness areas.

Page 37, lines 6 and 7 are changed as follows:

The proposed project would add to the intensity of land use within the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill and Van Ness areas

Page 46, lines 4 through 7 are changed as follows:

projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area that have been approved or are currently under review. Although these projects would result in an incremental change in the visual character of this portion of Pacific Avenue, the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor, and the ~~Russian Hill~~ area Nob Hill, they would be consistent with and would not substantially

Page 48, Impact Analysis, first paragraph, second line is changed as follows:

alter existing development patterns in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area or in San Francisco as a whole. Table 2:

Page 51, Cumulative Impacts, first paragraph, third line is changed as follows:

Projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

Page 54, Cumulative Archeological Resource Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. These projects, in combination with the proposed

Page 60, Cumulative Historic Architectural Resources Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or are under review. These projects, in

The second heading on page 60 of the DEIR is revised as follows:

## **MITIGATION AND IMPROVEMENT MEASURES**

The following text is added after the first paragraph of page 62:

### **IMPROVEMENT MEASURE I-CP-1**

Prior to construction, the project sponsor shall provide adequate documentation of the 1661 Pacific Avenue building. The documentation shall be submitted to the City and County of San Francisco Planning Department and found to be adequate prior to authorization of any permit that may be required for demolition of the building. In addition, the project sponsor shall prepare and transmit the photographs and descriptions of the property to the History Room of the San Francisco Public Library.

- Images must be fully identified with the name and location of the structure, a description of the feature or view being photographed and the direction in which the photograph was taken, as well as the name of the photographer and the date created.
- Black and white, 35-millimeter photographs of the interior and exterior of the building using current archival standards. Either digital photographs submitted on CD as well as archival paper, or submitted negatives and 5-by-7 inch print on archival paper, should meet National Register Survey Standards (<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/policyexpansion.htm>).

- If there is a historic photo showing the building's context on Pacific Avenue another photo should be taken from the same vantage point and retained and displayed at the new building.

Page 92, Cumulative Noise Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. These projects, in combination with the proposed

Page 125, Cumulative Wind Impacts, first paragraph, fourth line is changed as follows:

(generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been

Page 132, Cumulative Shadow Impacts, first paragraph, fourth line is changed as follows:

projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

Page 133, fifth line is changed as follows:

dispersion of these projects throughout the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area

Page 135, Cumulative Recreation Impacts, first paragraph, third line is changed as follows:

(generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have

Page 140, Cumulative Utilities and Service Systems Impacts, first paragraph, fourth line is changed as follows:

projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

Page 143, Cumulative Utilities Public Services Impacts, first paragraph, fourth line is changed as follows:

projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

Page 145, Cumulative Impacts, first paragraph, fourth line is changed as follows:

projects (generally less than 20 units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

Page 150, Cumulative Geology and Soils Impacts, first paragraph, fourth to ninth lines are changed as follows:

units) in the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. As discussed above, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on geology and soils, and the other projects are also subject to CEQA

requirements for mitigation of impacts on geology and soils. Due to the distance of these cumulative projects throughout the Polk Street/Van Ness Avenue corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area and the nature of their potential geological impacts, these

Page 155, Cumulative Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

corridor and the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. As discussed above, the

Page 162, Cumulative Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. These projects, in combination with the proposed

Page 164, Cumulative Impacts, first paragraph, fifth line is changed as follows:

~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. As discussed above, the proposed project would

Page 166, second line is changed as follows:

~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill area have been approved or under review. As discussed above, the proposed project would

Page 172, Impacts, second paragraph, last line is changed as follows:

the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill and Van Ness areas.

Page 178, last paragraph, second line is changed as follows:

quality, cost-effective, mixed-use residential-retail building and associated parking in the ~~Russian Hill~~ Nob Hill

## 2. STAFF-INITIATED CHANGES

Page 8, third paragraph, second sentence is changed as follows:

There are various building types, sizes, and ages, with building heights ranging from one to ~~nine~~ twelve stories within a two-block vicinity of the project.

Page 32, first paragraph, second sentence is changed as follows:

Buildings of various types, sizes, and ages exist in the project vicinity, and building heights vary from one to ~~nine~~ twelve stories within a two-block vicinity of the project.

D. DEIR REVISIONS

Page 59, first full paragraph, second line is changed to delete duplication as follows:

Of the exiting vehicular entrance ~~for a vehicular entrance~~ to the project's below-grade parking garage.



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**APPENDICES:**

1. Comment Letters
  2. Transcript of DEIR Public Hearing
  3. January 2007 McGrew Historic Resource Evaluation
  4. November 2007 Planning Department  
Historic Resource Evaluation Response
  5. April and July 2008 Page & Turnbull Memoranda
  6. September 2008 Subsequent Planning Department  
Historic Resource Evaluation Response
  7. June 2010 Planning Department  
Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures Survey
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**Appendix 1:**  
**COMMENT LETTERS**

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# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

December 8, 2009

Mr. Bill Wycko  
Environmental Review Officer  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103

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Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

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Dear Mr. Wycko,

On Wednesday, December 2, 2009, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) held a public hearing and took public comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), dated November 18, 2009, for the 1645 Pacific Avenue project. After discussion the HPC arrived at the following comments:

Commissioner Martinez:

- Issue of "façade-ism" raised regarding the differentiation of the new 1645 Pacific Avenue building and the vertical addition to the historic 1661 Pacific Avenue building. The commissioner indicated he was fine with the design/façade separation of the two buildings; however, the overall height and bulk would work better if it were reduced by 1-story. He thought the bulk of the proposed new building would overwhelm the 1661 Pacific Avenue historic building. } 17
- Overall, the Commissioner considers the 1661 Pacific Avenue building as a whole (all existing roof/walls/facades) as a historic resource even though some of the facades may not be original. } 21

Commissioner Wolfram:

- Regarding both the 1645 Pacific Avenue and the 1661 Pacific Avenue historic building, the Commissioner didn't find the HRER very helpful in providing more historical context of the existing buildings and adjacent area, and thought the historic analysis could be more thorough using additional visual representation. } 21
- The Commissioner also thought that historical documentation (HABs) of the two subject buildings should be added to the Draft EIR as mitigation. } 26

Commissioner Hasz:

- The Commissioner stated that there was not enough context information provided in the Draft EIR and supporting Historic documents to comment or suggest direction, especially with 2 properties proposed for development in the Historic Auto Row District. } 21

Public Comment:

- James Jonenitis: Provided some visual and verbal overview of the history of the project site and existing buildings, which included photos and newspaper clippings for former occupants of the site and buildings. He also provided a site plan and elevation of the San Francisco Riding Academy, which was a former occupant of the 1645 Pacific Avenue } 22

building. Mr. Jonitis mentioned he would be happy to provide the background information a part of the record. } 22

- Dawn Trennert: Ms. Trennert would like to see the historic nature of the project site and surrounding area is highlighted more into the project design and Draft EIR. Since there are surrounding historic building, Ms. Trennert believed it would be an excellent opportunity to celebrate the past. She suggested that the project reframe from throwing out the “old” for the “new” and highlight the historic nature of the adjacent neighborhood. } 21

Commissioner Matsuda:

- The Commissioner would like to see another EIR Alternative proposed or at least considered around the subject of historic resources. } 34

- Commissioner Matsuda also would like to see documentation of the buildings history added to the mitigation measures. } 26

President Chase:

- The Commissioner echoes the comments previously stated by the other commissioner. Specifically, the Auto Row Historic District history of the area and San Francisco Riding Academy needs to be looked at in more detail and addressed in the Draft EIR through a documentation mitigation measure. } 26

Commissioner Damkroger (absent, sent comments via email):

- Agree that 1645 Pacific does not appear to be significant
- Accept determination that 1661 Pacific does appear to be significant as a contributor to a potential CR historic district.
- Based on the DEIR and observation of the site, but with out the benefit of the staff presentation, I have reservations about the determination of no significant adverse impact to 1661 Pacific. I appreciate the retention of the façade and the 15-foot setback. While I understand the staff’s argument that a substantial portion (rear and side walls) of the building are compromised, replaced or a party wall, it is the volume of the building that in part lends it its significance. The front façade clearly is the most important elevation of the building and the element that most conveys its significance, but removal of all but the front facade and construction of a new building behind it, makes it difficult to convey original character of the building. The farther set back the new building, the better. Fifteen feet does not seem enough, though I don’t know the magic number. } 21

- I appreciate the effort to use elements of the potential district in the new building. However, the proposed building is massive and its scale feels out of character with the existing neighborhood, though the two residential buildings to the east are five or more stories. } 13

The Historic Preservation Commission appreciates the opportunity to participate in the review of this environmental document.

Sincerely,

Charles Chase, Interim President  
Historic Preservation Commission

C. Damkroger Comments on 1645 1661 Pacific DEIR

-agree that 1645 Pacific does not appear to be significant

-accept determination that 1661 Pacific does appear to be significant as a contributor to a potential CR historic district.

-Based on the DEIR and observation of the site, but with out the benefit of the staff presentation, I have reservations about the determination of no significant adverse impact to 1661 Pacific. I appreciate the retention of the façade and the 15-foot setback. While I understand the staff's argument that a substantial portion (rear and side walls) of the building are compromised, replaced or a party wall, it is the volume of the building that in part lends it its significance. The front façade clearly is the most important elevation of the building and the element that most conveys its significance, but removal of all but the front facade and construction of a new building behind it, makes it difficult to convey original character of the building. The farther set back the new building, the better. Fifteen feet does not seem enough, though I don't know the magic number.

-I appreciate the effort to use elements of the potential district in the new building. However, the proposed building is massive and its scale feels out of character with the existing neighborhood, though the two residential buildings to the east are five or more stories.





January 14, 2010

Bill Wycko  
Environmental Review Officer  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission St. Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Comments to the Draft Environmental Impact Review  
1645 Pacific Avenue Project  
Case No. 2007.0519E  
EIR Public Hearing Date: December 10, 2009

Dear Mr. Wycko:

We are writing on behalf of the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association (MPNA) in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) prepared for 1645 Pacific Avenue. We are concerned over the many impacts of this project on our neighborhood. Our concerns are based on issues raised by the DEIR, issues that we believe have been addressed inadequately, or have been overlooked. They are summarized as follows:

**Land Use Impacts**

**Compatibility with Planning and Policies:**

The Polk Street NCD is a mixed-use neighborhood of small scaled, locally owned retail stores that have traditionally served the Russian Hill , Nob Hill districts as well as the other surrounding neighborhoods.

Included in the mix (on traversal streets such as Jackson and Pacific) are the additional small commercial shops and auto-related businesses that once supported the Van Ness Street car showrooms. These small industrial spaces and businesses are rapidly being demolished and replaced with speculative housing projects. The mixed-use character of the neighborhood is cumulatively being altered by this trend, simplifying the once rich variety of uses to only housing and retail. Auto crafts jobs are also being lost, nine of them with this project alone and we are quickly losing any balance between high end housing and small businesses.

While the individual buildings may not always be strictly historically significant, all of these small contextual industrial buildings contribute to the look, feel, and function of the neighborhood. As such the proposed project may conflict with the City Planning Code Section 101.1, policies 1, 2, and 7:

1. *That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced;*
2. *That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods;*
7. *That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;*

Opting for a smaller-scaled preservation alternatives seem a better development choice since they would have less impact on neighborhood character preservation.

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### Land Use Character

The DEIR states that the project would “be compatible with the existing dense character of Pacific Avenue, Polk Street, and Van Ness Avenue corridors in the project vicinity, as well as be compatible with the size, character, and mix of uses that exist in the area...Therefore the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse impact on the prevalent land use character of the vicinity.”(DEIR page 36)However, the project is *not* part of the Van Ness corridor nor is it compatible with the scale and character of Pacific Avenue. Pacific Avenue is a small-scale street composed of one or two stories buildings. Only two buildings are 5 stories and none are higher than that. The proposed development would be 65 feet to the roof with 3'-9" parapets and 16 foot high penthouses. At this height, it significantly exceeds the height of all of the buildings on Pacific Avenue from Van Ness in the Polk Street NCD and the Pacific Avenue NCD.

The DEIR repeatedly improperly references the project approved at 1946 Polk Street (Pacific Terrace). The report erroneously states that the height of the 1946 Polk Street building was approved at 6 floors, rather than 5 floors with a significant 12 foot set back on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. In addition 1946 Polk Street is substantially smaller building of 38 units whereas 1645 Pacific Avenue proposes 49 units. The consistent cites and comparison to 1646 Polk Street is entirely incorrect and misleading.

The DEIR also referenced approved project at 1650 Broadway. This project is neither nearby nor is it in the Polk Street neighborhood. This project is located on the other side of Van Ness and Broadway and is in Pacific Heights. Referencing this project is also misleading.

The DEIR makes frequent references to the Van Ness corridor and nearby buildings in the Van Ness corridor. This is misleading because the Van Ness corridor is a high-rise spine running along a 100-foot wide street supporting highway 101. As such, the zoning regulations permit greater heights, densities, and bulk. The specific buildings cited as examples for scale, 1650 Jackson and the Medical Arts Building, are both in the Van Ness corridor and are not adequate examples for the Polk and Pacific neighborhoods.

### Zoning, Height and Bulk Neighborhood Character

The DEIR minimizes the impact of bulk on the character of the Polk NCD. First, the report misrepresents the character of the neighborhood and Pacific Avenue by over-emphasizing the characteristics of the Van Ness Corridor resulting in a non-objective and inaccurate evaluation.

The DEIR states “the proposed project would not be expected to cause substantial and demonstrable negative change, or disrupt the existing visual character of the project vicinity.” Yet, compared to Pacific Avenue, the building height, size, and bulk are overwhelming. The bulk and length exception the project is seeking will result in a domineering building. The project would not even meet the Van Ness zoning guidelines. Van Ness, often referred to in the report as justification, is a 100-foot wide street where the buildings are meant to enclose the street space.

The bulk guidelines are in place to avoid the construction of projects of overwhelming scale. To quote (San Francisco General Plan policies 3.6, 3.7, and 3.8) “to help reduce the negative effects of development on large sites.” The DEIR analysis is limited to the discussion of height, not taking bulk into consideration, misrepresenting the actual impact of the project on neighborhood character. A more thorough analysis, including consideration of the bulk impact, is necessary and should be required for a more accurate representation of how this project will affect the neighborhood.

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San Francisco neighborhoods are experienced street by street. We encourage you to evaluate the proposed 1645 Pacific project in the context of Pacific Avenue. In the context of Pacific this project is overwhelming and dominating. The following photos clearly illustrate the visual impact this project will have on the street. The first is of the north side of Pacific Avenue, the second is of the south side of Pacific Avenue.

The project is asking for a variance on both the length and bulk of the building. We suggest that this will result in increasing the negative aesthetic impact this project will have to the character of the neighborhood.

For a building with a footprint this large, a lower structure would mitigate the impacts of the development to the neighborhood character.

#### **Cumulative impacts of out of scale projects in the Polk Street NCD**

It is the practice of developers of large sites to ask for bulk exceptions. These overly large projects compound their effects on the neighborhood character – especially in the Polk Street area where several large developments are currently being proposed. We suggest that the DEIR has overlooked the delicate balance of the Polk NCD and has not accurately portrayed the cumulative impact these projects have on the fragile character of this area.

CEQA requires That cumulative impacts of past and future projects be evaluated when studying the environmental impacts of a project in question.

### **B. Aesthetics**

Impact of the project on scenic vistas and views

The DEIR states that “There are no public scenic vistas available from the project vicinity.” (DEIR page 40) This is not an accurate statement nor are the exhibits (page 43) included in the report representative of the view down Pacific Avenue. The exhibits are taken from a vantage point so close to the project that only the project itself and the nearby buildings are included in the frame. Please refer to the photographs attached to this letter for a more accurate representation (Exhibit 1).

The San Francisco General Plan states:

“OBJECTIVE 1 EMPHASIS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC PATTERN WHICH GIVES TO THE CITY AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS AN IMAGE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND A MEANS OF ORIENTATION.

San Francisco has an image and character in its city pattern which depend especially upon views, topography, streets, building form and major landscaping. This pattern gives an organization and sense of purpose to the city, denotes the extent and special nature of districts, and identifies and makes prominent the centers of human activity. The pattern also assists in orientation for travel on foot, by automobile and by public transportation. The city pattern should be recognized, protected and enhanced.”

The General Plan further states:

“Building height can define districts and centers of activity. These advantages can be achieved without blocking or reduction of views from private properties, public areas or major roadways, if a proper plan for building height is followed.”

Pacific Avenue was originally developed as the gateway to Pacific Heights. It was designated as an avenue -- rather than a street -- and it was one of the first links between Pacific Heights, Nob Hill, Montgomery Street and the Embarcadero and the piers.

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The proposed 1645 Pacific project will completely occlude the Pacific Avenue view. See Exhibit 1 attached. The project will substantially and adversely degrade a scenic vista. This constitutes a significant negative impact to the character of the environs that is not mentioned in the DEIR.

We suggest that the project be held to a 40 to 45 foot maximum height to preserve the significant view to Nob Hill. See exhibit.

*From the San Francisco General Plan Policy 2.1: "Views from streets can provide a means for orientation and help the observer to perceive the city and its districts more clearly." and*

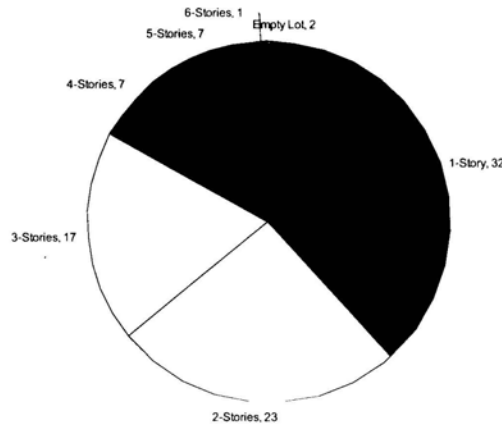
*"Blocking, construction or other impairment of pleasing street views of the Bay or Ocean, distant hills, or other parts of the city can destroy an important characteristic of the unique setting and quality of the city."*

**Visual Character:**

The DEIR is misleading in that misinterprets the visual character of the project site in comparison to buildings in the Van Ness corridor and buildings on Jackson street that are part of the Van Ness Corridor higher density zoning district. Using Van Ness corridor buildings as justification for the design of the project diminishes the real impact this building will have on the Polk NCD neighborhood fabric and character.

This building is of overwhelming scale to the Polk NCD and to the immediate context of Pacific Avenue. There are few building of this height and bulk in the Polk NCD and all have had a negative visual impact. They overwhelm the surroundings and dominate the street. (examples) Architectural treatments have been unsuccessful in mitigating the destructive impact of these out of scale structures. The trend of accumulating multiple parcels for large development projects threatens to dismantle the elements that constitute physical character of the Polk NCD: small scale (frontage and height), mixed use, variety of form and materials, rhythm, proportion, and horizontality. Only 2% of buildings along the Polk Street NCD (measured from California Street to Union) are 6-stories while 82% of the buildings are between one and four stories. 64% of the buildings are one to two stories.

**Polk Street NCD**  
From California to Broadway



More specifically, this block of Pacific Avenue is a very small-scale street. On this block most of the buildings are one or two stories tall. The two story historic firehouse anchors the scale of the block. Two buildings are 5 stories. The proposed mid-block development is 65 feet to the roof with 3'-9" parapets and 16 foot high penthouses. At this height, it exceeds the height of all of the buildings on Pacific Avenue from Van Ness in the Polk Street NCD and the Pacific Avenue NCD.

The negative effect of this large building to urban form is compounded by its mid-block location. Typically, corner locations are more preferable for large developments in that they emphasize the ends of the blocks and also have more breathing space for their mass.

Most of the proposed building presents a shear wall on Pacific Avenue. Although the building includes setbacks, with the exception of the setback over the garage, the setbacks are only six feet and are not continuous. This is hardly enough to be significant, which is why the project sponsor is seeking a bulk exception. The building presents a jumpy massing in stark contrast with the rest of the street. The five-story addition to the retained historic garage, is out of scale to the existing garage, destroying its character. The fact that this portion of the building is designed mimicking an industrial style does little to mitigate the sense of a big mass squashing a little building.

We suggest that this portion of the building be severely reduced in height or eliminated as shown in partial preservation alternative. We suggest that the entire building be reduced in height and that deep setbacks be introduced to mitigate the shear wall effect on Pacific. The 1946 Polk Street project, frequently cited as an example to be emulated in this DEIR, was altered to a five-floor building with fifth floor setbacks of 12 feet by the project sponsor to harmonize with the character and scale of the neighborhood. See Exhibit 2 attached.

In Section 5-B, under the "Visual Character Impact Analysis" heading on page 45, the document states that, "the visual character and massing of the proposed project would be similar to the larger modern and historical structures in the vicinity to the West and South on Van Ness Avenue and

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Jackson Street, respectively, and would be consistent with the mixed-use, high-density urban form of the neighborhood and Pacific Avenue corridor." It then goes on to state that, "for all of the above reasons, the proposed project would not be expected to cause a substantial and demonstrable negative change, or disrupt the existing visual character of the project vicinity."

Again, the document only makes references to buildings in the Van Ness corridor, neither of which are visible from Pacific Avenue. It neglects to mention that all of the buildings along the North side of Pacific Avenue between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street are 30 ft or less in height. This is a substantial omission which must be rectified.

The project is completely out of balance with the rest of Pacific Avenue. The two 5-story buildings to the East of the project site have already begun to skew the balance of the block. The proposed project would continue that trend, but that fact is not called out anywhere in the document when assessing the impact the project would have on the visual character of the area.

The diagrams in the document, on pages 42 and 43, also neglect to illustrate the North side of Pacific Avenue.

Also in Section 5-B, under the "Cumulative Aesthetic Impacts" heading on page 46, the document notes that, "the proposed project would not result in a cumulative significant impact on the visual character of the project area, when considered together with the recently approved projects at 1946 Polk Street and 1650 Broadway described previously in the Land Use section on page 37."

We are concerned with how the document defines the term, "project area" because it allows for the referencing of projects that are several blocks away and in altogether different zones and corridors.

Also, by only referencing new developments, and not the existing structures along the North side of Pacific Avenue, the document isn't fully addressing the impact of the project. The analysis should pay equal attention to what currently exists, and not reference developments that aren't relevant (in terms of not being anywhere near the proposed project), just because they're new.

In conclusion, the Land Use Character, Visual Character, and Cumulative Aesthetics impact analyses in the DEIR are both inadequate, and in some parts, inaccurate, and need to be corrected.

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### **C: Population, Employment, and Housing**

#### *Elimination of Neighborhood-serving Commercial Space*

The DEIR states on page 48: "The demolition of the approximately 27,275 sq. ft. of automotive service space on the site would result in the displacement of approximately nine existing employees...This loss would be offset by the proposed retail space, which would accommodate approximately ten new employees...."

The Polk NCD is a mixed-use neighborhood that includes a variety of commercial spaces in addition to housing and retail. The disappearance of these spaces and uses is increasing as the development of speculative housing projects displaces them. The proposed project demolishes 27,275 sq feet of high bay commercial space and pushes out the service businesses that occupy them along with the nine jobs. Although the DEIR states that the retail space the new development includes, will replace the jobs, the service uses will leave the neighborhood forever and most likely seek more economic space outside the city. This will reduce the diversity of businesses in this historically mixed-use neighborhood. The cumulative impact of this development trend of replacing neighborhood commercial with speculative housing will be the homogenization of our neighborhood and the reduction of neighborhood services. We suggest that this is a highly

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undesirable outcome especially in light of the increasingly high vacancy rate in residential properties in the city. The impact of job reduction should be highlighted as a negative impact, given that no new businesses are being planned or proposed---merely space for possible accommodation of unknown retail.

The mix of commercial/service uses in the Polk NCD is a distinctive and desirable feature of the neighborhood character. Historically the service garages and similar businesses are in support of the automobile showrooms in the Van Ness district. The high bay space also provides the kind of space necessary for builder's suppliers and similar businesses. These spaces are the urban and sensitive versions of the big box suburban stores. We suggest that the DEIR evaluate the need for both the uses and type of space these high bay spaces provide and the cumulative negative impact of their demolition on the neighborhood's diversity and services available in the city.

*Appropriate Commercial Space*

The Polk Street NCD supports small and locally owned businesses. Typically, smaller commercial space is compatible with small businesses and neighbors urge that this type of commercial space be provided on the project site. At the urging of Planning, the developer has added commercial space which continues the history of this commercial street; however, it's pertinent that the size be appropriate for this corridor as well. Too often, neighbors see large, inadequate commercial space stay vacant for years.

*Out of balance housing mix:*

Per census data from 2006 – 2008, over half our population makes less than \$75,000/year. Arguably those numbers are worse since the recent recession. SFGate reported that "A San Francisco household requires an annual income of \$196,878 to afford a median-priced home in the city." (June 2008) Reports state that one of the primary reasons families leave San Francisco is because of the housing costs. San Francisco is effectively losing its middle class.

Yet, this development fails to offer [1] any on site BMR housing. This has a devastating effect on the fabric of the neighborhood and the ability for this city to retain low- to middle-class residents and families. While still only an option for the developer, we feel this is a fatal flaw the City has allowed developers to use. The DEIR states on page 50, "There is shortage of affordable housing in the City; however, this deficit is an existing condition." The DEIR cites the problem but this development does nothing to solve the problem.

As is, this development [2] has an over abundance of studio apartments – which fails to support retention of families and is only targeted at the most affluent. As planned, well over half of the units are studio apartments (26 out of 48).

26	Studio	54%	69%
7	1 bedroom	15%	
12	2 bedroom	25%	
3	3 bedroom	6%	
48	Total		

The disproportionate number of studios or "junior" one bedroom units does not provide the type of housing San Francisco needs or more specifically what Middle Polk/Nob Hill needs. This is more typical of pied-a-tiers, timeshares or corporate housing and does not further the housing needs of the city. This is an unfair burden to home owners and the city's tax base.

The DEIR states on page 50, "The proposed 48 residential unites in the proposed project would help to accommodate part of this [housing] need." This development needs to commit to providing **appropriate** 2- and 3-bedroom apartments for families.

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**D: Cultural Resources**

The Historic Report written by Patrick McGrew Associates erroneously locates the project within the Van Ness Plan and recounts the entire history of Van Ness Street while ignoring any history of the Polk Street neighborhood (in which it is located). This report is the basis for the DEIR findings. We are of the opinion that the report, in ignoring the Polk Street neighborhood altogether is inadequate and requires further development to meet CEQA requirements.

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In addition, on Page 56 the DEIR states that “the building at 1645 Pacific Avenue is not a contributor to an auto-themed historic district, because it predates the introduction of the automobile to San Francisco, was altered to accommodate auto-related uses, and is not intimately connected with the theme.”

We would contend that an auto garage is a related use and intimately connected with the theme, and conclude that the building is a significant supporting structure to the auto-related thematic historic district. This is supported by the McGrew historic report on page 12:

“Other buildings directly connected to the theme, but of secondary importance, such as garages, paint shops or repair shops that contained original exterior and interior features such as garage doors and/or auto ramps designed especially for the automotive work, would also be considered contributing structures”

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The analysis states that 1661 Pacific Ave. is a historically significant structure relating to Van Ness auto row. Yet the design of the project merely retains the façade of the building, compromising its historic significance.

We would cumulative impact of the removal of auto-related industries and buildings, compromises the intent of the Auto Row historic district. CEQA requires the analysis of cumulative impacts but the DEIR seems to gloss over the impact of the continuous loss of auto related businesses by simply stating that other projects have not been found to have significant architectural resource impacts.

**E: Transportation and Circulation**

On page 70, under *Muni’s Transit Effectiveness Project*, the document identifies “potential changes to occur on mid-2009”. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009, San Francisco MUNI implemented substantial revisions to service on specific bus lines covered in the document.

Updated service changes are as follows:

The **1-California, the 12-Folsom-Pacific, the 19-Polk, the 27-Bryant, and the 47-Van Ness lines** have had segments eliminated, plus frequency and service hours have been reduced.

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Many buses now go downtown and do not go to the Ferry building, which will affect the volume of traffic throughout the city.

The 10-Townsend has been rerouted along Pacific Avenue AND both the 10-Townsend and 12-Folsom-Pacific now provide direct service to the Financial District via Sansome Street. This is a major change.

Given the revised Muni routes, I would suggest that the DEIR be updated to reflect the cumulative impact of these route and service changes.



On page 80 (Parking Impacts) the document cites 48- dwelling units, with 1:1 parking for all units, with the exception of 1 parking space reserved for an independently accessible car-share space. It has been demonstrated and proven that a single care-share space never works. There must be two or more car share spaces to make the service work.

As already stated, the breakdown of the types of residences planned are largely studio units which also have 1:1 parking. One would assume that these owner residents would be young single first time buyers, making them the most active commuters needing simultaneous egress and ingress in the early morning and late evening commuter hours. The DEIR does not include market research trending for studio residences in San Francisco, that would support demand for 1:1 parking. If an increase in car-share spaces is the growing trend, as I suspect, this would satisfy the City's initiatives for transit first.

One-to-one parking would result in 49 cars pulling in and out of the building, which could create significant traffic issues along Pacific. That potential impact isn't noted in the DEIR and should be further explored.

Lastly, the DEIR includes not analysis of the impact of the planned CPMC hospital planned on Van Ness. This project will have monumental impacts on traffic and transportation in the entire neighborhood. We are of the opinion that a traffic an transportation analysis that does not include the impact of CPMC is deficient and cannot present conclusive environmental impact findings. CEQA requires the analysis of cumulative impacts.

#### ***H: Wind and Shadow***

The DEIR states that the proposed project has no significant impacts on wind and shadows. Although shadows will not be cast on parkland, in the Polk NCD the streets are the useable open space. The neighborhood is full of cafes and restaurants that take advantage of the sunny streets for outdoor seating. On any clear day you will find people in this neighborhood taking advantage of the sunlight.

The proposed project will impact the potential outdoor use on Pacific Avenue. An outdoor eating area already exists towards the Polk Street corner and the possibility of café seating as part of the Fire House renovation has been proposed. The shadow study illustrates the impact on four days of the year. The project shadows will impact outdoor use in the late fall and early spring. We have looked at the shadows and reducing the project height to 50 feet would eliminate the shadow impacts of the project to the north side of Pacific, greatly increasing public access to sunlight.

Prop K protects certain public open spaces from shadows due to new development. In our area, we have only one park. Instead, our residents use the streets as our civic public spaces. The DEIR misrepresents the impact of this project on the neighborhood as it relates to shadows.

The current proposal involves a large 6 story building erected on the south side of a relatively small street – Pacific Avenue. This development will loom over the northern side of the street which is composed of a full block of 2 story commercial.

The project sponsor has provided results of a shadow impact at 4 specific points through a calendar year. With the exception of December, all impact study reflects that there will conveniently be no shadow that goes beyond the parked cars across the street. We feel this study inadequately addresses reality. The proposed structure is certain to block far more sunlight than stated, particularly during the winter months.

Despite the proposed building being three times the size of the current structure, it is inconceivable that there are not more severe shadow effects. If built, 1645 will be the largest development – in

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height and lot size – on the block. Yet, the shadow study included in the DEIR greatly diminishes the actual effect that the shadow of this building will create. When you take into account the cornices and mechanical penthouse, the proposed project could have impacts (visual, shadow, view obstruction, wind) equivalent to a 7-story building.

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The benefits that open space and light has on the pedestrian experience and commercial vitality is widely known and intuitive. While the proposed development includes its own commercial space, there is already a vibrant and active commercial stretch across the street that should be taken into account. The size of the proposed structure speaks for itself. There will be considerable impact neighboring dwelling units, open space, yards, surrounding areas and the general climate around the project.

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This is especially important for the future use of the Old Firehouse directly across the street. Recently approved by the Planning Commission, this structure will have outside seating and would be particularly sun sensitive.

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The shadow study reflected in the DEIR is not accurate and inadequate. A more thorough analysis should be done in order to better understand the drastic effects this development will have on the streetscape.

### Alternative analysis

The evaluation of alternatives in the DEIR is weighted towards the proposed project minimizing positive aspects of the proposed Preservation Alternative.

The DEIR states: "the Preservation alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative due to its reduced impact on historic architectural resources, and approximately 20 percent reduction in trip generation and related traffic and air quality impacts compared to the proposed project."

But also the impact on neighborhood character is minimized by reducing the bulk of the proposed structure. The proposed project is seeking bulk exceptions and while still overly tall for the context, the reduced length would mitigate the dominating mass of the project to Pacific Avenue. In addition, the character of the historic garage would not be compromised by the added mass above it.

### CEQA Section 15126.2 Consideration and Discussion of Alternatives to the Proposed Project

*(a) Alternatives to the Proposed Project. An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives ...*

*(f) Rule of reason. The range of alternatives required in an EIR is governed by a "rule of reason" that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice. The alternatives should be limited to those necessary to ones that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project ... The range of feasible alternatives shall be selected and discussed in a manner to foster meaningful public participation and informed decision making.*

Based on the CEQA sections above, we request that an additional alternative be developed and included in the DEIR. This alternative would be designed to eliminate obstruction of the view of Nob Hill from Pacific and Franklin, minimize shading of Pacific Avenue, and be more in keeping with the street scale and the adjacent buildings.

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We oppose the granting of any entitlements for this project. We also believe the EIR failed to adequately study the project and evaluate the scope of negative impacts that 1645 Pacific will have on the Polk/Pacific neighborhood.

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Sincerely,

Jon Faust

Wylie Adams

Patricia Sonnino

For the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association

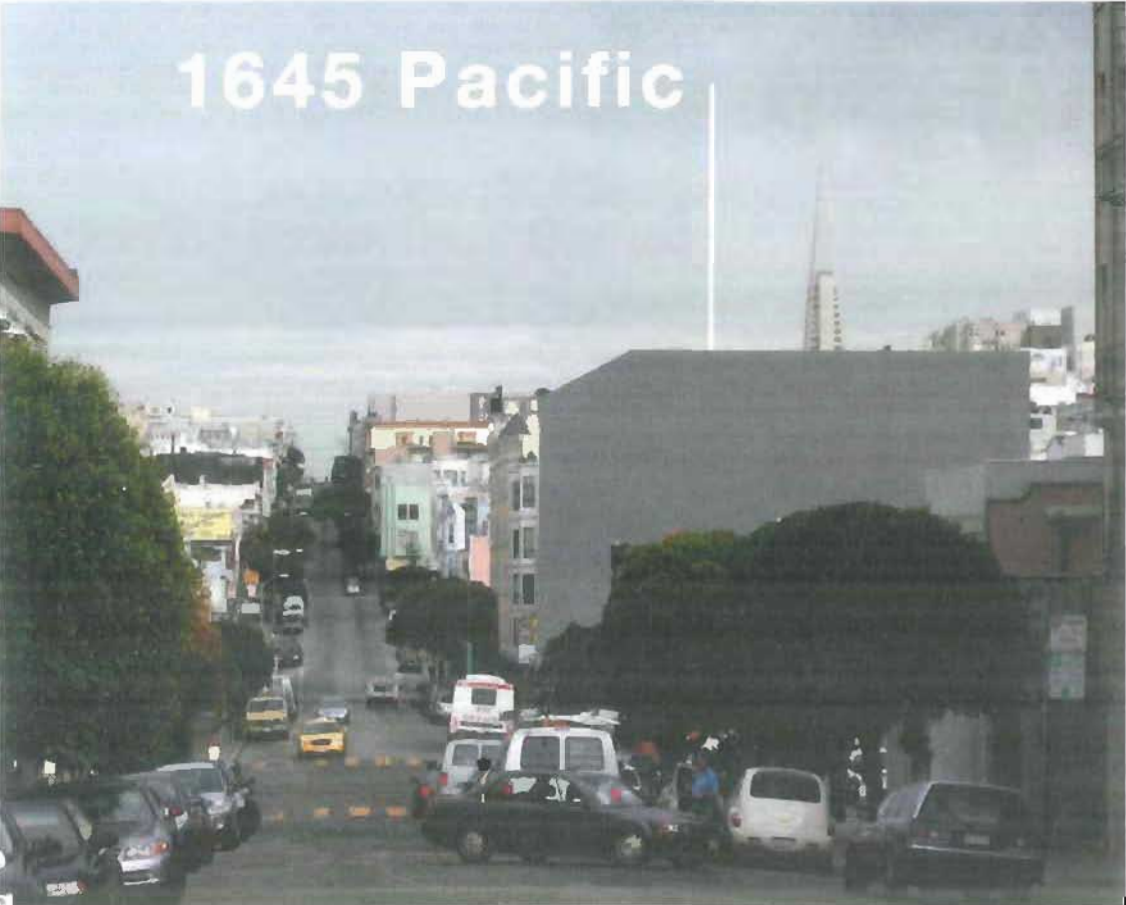
Cc: Ron Miguel, Planning Commission President, Christina Olague, Vice-President, Planning Commissioners Michael J. Antonini, Gwyneth Borden, William L. Lee, Kathrin Moore, Hisashi Sugaya, Supervisor David Chui

Attachments: Exhibit 1: View of Nob Hill and Exhibit 2: Pacific Avenue Photos

**Exhibit 1: View of Nob Hill**



View of Nob Hill down Pacific Avenue



View down Pacific Avenue showing view occluded by the mass of the proposed 1645 Pacific project.

## Exhibit 2: Pacific Avenue Photos



Pacific Avenue between Van Ness and Polk, North side of street



Pacific Avenue between Van Ness and Polk, South side of street including 1645 Project

The project is not compatible with the size, character, and mixed-use nature of the Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) area.

# Russian Hill Community Association

18 Delgado Place

San Francisco, CA 94109

415-776-2014

*Via Email and Regular Post*

December 9, 2009

Bill Wyco and Brett Bollinger  
City and County of San Francisco  
Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

**RECEIVED**

DEC 10 2009

CITY & COUNTY OF S.F.  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
M E A

Re: 2007.0519E—1645 Pacific Avenue Project

Dear Messrs. Wyco and Bollinger:

The Housing & Zoning Committee of the Russian Hill Community Association wishes to call to your attention that the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 1645 Pacific Avenue Project does not address the precedent setting nature of the findings.

There are numerous structures that fit the description of the 1645 project, not only in the surrounding neighborhood, but in the City and County of San Francisco as a whole. The fact that the precedent setting nature of this project and the potential cumulative impact of this project were not thoroughly examined in the DEIR is an omission of the highest order and renders the DEIR inadequate in its present form.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) specifically directs the lead agency to consider:

...whether the effects of the project are cumulatively considerable. "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects. (CEQA 15064(h)(1); 15065(a)(2); 15065(a)(3).

The Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 1645 Pacific Avenue Project does not identify the number of similar structures in the neighborhood let alone the City which could conceivably be impacted by the Planning Department's recommendations. Bulk, density, scale are concerns of all of the neighborhoods and the approach that is taken in reviewing this project will be relied on by future developers and neighborhoods.

The Housing & Zoning Committee strongly urges the Planning Department to address the cumulative impact of the Draft Environmental Impact Report on the neighborhoods throughout the City that have similar structures. Decisions relative to the 1645 Project will have an impact on all of the neighborhoods in the City.

Sincerely,

  
Kathleen E. Courtney  
Chair, Housing & Zoning Committee

Cc: Middle Polk Neighborhood Association  
Pacific Avenue Neighborhood Association  
Russian Hill Community Association – Housing & Zoning Committee

7

11 December 2009

From: Bill and Diane Carroll  
1650 Jackson #608  
San Francisco, CA 94109

To: Environmental Review Officer  
1650 Mission St. Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

RE: DEIR for 1645 Pacific Ave Project  
Planning Dept Case #2007.0519E

To Whom it May Concern:

After plowing through this report for 1645 Pacific project, several misleading items pop out, one of which is the location of the project. 1645 Pacific is located in the NOB HILL area, not in the RUSSIAN HILL area as written up. According to all the City maps, Russian Hill begins north of Broadway.

} 3

In the project vicinity, numerous references are made about a 9 story building, inferring that a 6 story building would blend right in. That 9 story building is in the 85' zone, is on a different street and was built with no exceptions.

} 14

A false reference was made several times about an approved 6 story project at 1946 Polk Street (SE corner). That project was approved for 4 stories and a 12' setback for a 5<sup>th</sup>. Also, citing a 7 story building located on Broadway in Pacific Heights has no

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DEC 15 2009  
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PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
M E A

relevance either.

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Granting bulk exceptions would have a huge impact on the neighborhood, none of them good. The block 1645 Pacific is located on is all 2 story buildings with two 50' apartment buildings next door and east of the project. An 81'building would skew the entire character of that block and create huge shadows for the neighbors on the opposite side of the street. The shadow study did not take into consideration the winter months when the shadows would be the longest and shade the neighboring northside businesses.

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Supposedly the rear yard would be 32' deep but that is only on the sub-level with 12' of the 32' being private patios. On the next level up and going to the top, the building is bumped out in the rear allowing only 20' to the rear area. That does not leave enough open space as required by code.

} 2

On page 45, a justified rational claims to..."provide a visual transition between the large scale buildings along the Van Ness corridor to the west..." What large scale buildings, the one story Harris Steak House on the NE corner of Van Ness/Pacific and the other one story restaurant on the SE corner of Van Ness/Pacific????

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We believe that the shadow study along with many other

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discrepancies and inaccuracies makes this DEIR inadequate. A more thorough analysis should be done in order to better understand the drastic effects this development will have on the streetscape.

Thank you.

*Bill Carroll*  
*Alan Carroll*

November 20, **RECEIVED**

Mr. Bill Wycko  
Environmental Review Officer  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street  
Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

NOV 23 2009  
CITY & COUNTY OF S.F.  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
M.E.A.

**Re: 2007.0519E @1645 Pacific Avenue**

Dear Mr. Wycko:

As a neighbor of the proposed building having lived at 1591 Jackson Street for 19 years, I am very much opposed to the size of this project as the area is already severely congested due to the amount of residential construction that has taken place in this neighborhood. This build-up has brought enough density, noise and traffic pollution **without** adding 64,170 more sq. feet to an already crowded area.

In the mere four square blocks from Pacific to Washington and Larkin to Van Ness mixed use low rise structures have been replaced with significantly larger buildings at the following addresses:

- 1536 Pacific - four story building now under construction
- 1601 Pacific - five story building
- 1625 Pacific - five story building
- 1650 Jackson - nine story building
- 1701 Jackson - nine story building
- 1810-12 Polk Street - five story building
- 1702 Washington Street - five story building
- 1725 Washington Street - five story building
- 1800 Washington Street - ten story building

In addition yet another large development at 1946 Polk (at Pacific) has been proposed which would replace several commercial structures and a much needed parking lot.

Since these buildings have gone up the traffic and noise increase is substantial. I am not opposed to development however it needs to be appropriately scaled. Therefore, I am asking that the Commission reconsider the size of 1645 Pacific project. If you must approve it, do it for a smaller building with a lesser number of units. I know that the developers want to maximize their profit; but it is being made at the expense of those who have lived and wish to continue living in this neighborhood. After all, the developers will not be residing here but we will.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara M. Failing  
1591 Jackson Street - 20  
San Francisco, Ca 94109

415 567-2220



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NOV 23 2009

CITY & COUNTY OF S.F.  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
M E A

Re Case #2007.0519E  
1645 Pacific Ave. - S.F.

29

You need at least 15 more parking spaces for tenants. That area is already too difficult to find parking on the street! There are 15 units that will house 2-3 people. They will need parking too. Don't think that they will not buy/have cars, just because there are no spaces. Build more parking spaces! This should be the case for all new condo/apt developments.

E. Shaw

415 885-1140

**RECEIVED**

NOV 24 2009

CITY & COUNTY OF S.F.  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
M E A

Lorri Ungaretti  
1591 Jackson Street #23  
San Francisco, CA 94109

November 23, 2009

Bill Wycko, Environmental Review Officer  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

RE: 2007.0519E (1645 Pacific Avenue)

Dear Mr. Wycko:

I wrote to you on October 9, 2008 about the development at 1645 Pacific Avenue. I recently received a public notice about the draft EIR report for the proposed development and thought I would write to you again.

I am extremely concerned about the proposed project at 1645 Pacific Avenue. I believe that the project is much too large for a neighborhood already congested by a large number of recently-built housing developments.

My brother bought this condo at Polk and Jackson Streets in late 1988. A few years later, a large eight-story condo building was constructed in the middle of the block between Polk and Van Ness. I moved into this condo in late 1994. Over the past ten years, the following developments have been built within two blocks of my home:

- Van Ness between Washington and Jackson (middle of the block). Two tall towers with 100 to 200 condos replaced a two-story motel.
- Polk and Pacific (southwest corner). A 5-story apartment building replaced a car repair facility.
- Polk between Washington and Jackson (next to our building). A 4-story condo building replaced a 1-story building that had two businesses.
- Polk and Pacific (southeast corner). A proposed 5-story, multi-unit condo building will replace two one-story buildings and a parking lot.
- Polk and Washington (southwest corner). A 5-story apartment or condo building was constructed several years ago, but I can't remember what was there before.
- Pacific between Polk and Larkin (middle of block). A small 3- or 4-story apartment or condo building is being ~~constructed~~ proposed.

It's obvious that at least twice the number of people who lived within these four-square blocks live here now, with traffic and noise much more dense and pronounced than before. Please reconsider adding 48 *more* units to this already densely populated area.

Sincerely,

*Lorri Ungaretti*

Mark Whisler EA  
*Whisler Financial Group*  
2509 Capitol Ave Suite 100  
Sacramento, Ca 95816  
916-446-6666, Fax 916-446-2136  
[mark@whisler.com](mailto:mark@whisler.com), CAFR 8005-39506R

Bill Wycko  
Environmental Review Officer  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

SENT BY EMAIL and MAIL 1/2/2009 (Brett.Bollinger@sfgov.org)

Attn: Environmental Review Officer  
1645 Pacific Avenue Project Draft Environmental Impact Report  
(2007.0519E)

**We oppose the granting of any entitlements for this project. We also believe the EIR failed to adequately study the project. The study and mitigation measures are inadequate for the reasons listed below.**

**1) Parking Exhaust Gases.**

On the parking plan inside the building, now in the basement, we are concerned about idling and maneuvering cars - and the pollution they create:

- a. on the persons in the garage,
- b. in the commercial spaces,
- c. in the 1st floor residential spaces,
- d. in the backyards,
- e. and on the air quality to the buildings of similar height directly adjacent to the property.

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**2) Neighborhood Serving Service Buildings.**

This building proposes replacing a neighborhood serving service building and no study was made of this projects (or the cumulative impacts) on the availability of similar services in the neighborhood in recent years, and no mitigation measure proposed for this.

4

3) **Specific Noise Impacts.**

The noise impacts were not adequately studied and not mitigation measures were addressed to resolve the cumulative impacts on the neighborhood. Three specific problems not included and need studied, measured, and mitigated:

- a. trash pick-ups due to the large number of new large buildings in the neighborhood - from 4 AM on the noise levels are repeated and at a volume to wake hundreds of people every 10 to 15 minutes from 4 am on. Building heights tend to multiply the sounds affect on the neighborhood increasing its levels.
- b. City police are now using Polk street as their through street (caused in part the cumulative effects of traffic caused by the over building of the neighborhood making Van Ness work poorly for them). The affect is sirens all night long on Poll Street and their awful impacts.
- c. Police, fire department, and ambulance calls and sirens 24/7 have directly increased with the cumulative impact of the housing built and proposed in the neighborhood.

Over the past ten years, the following developments have been built within two blocks of this proposed project and contribute to the increased noise:

- Van Ness between Washington and Jackson (middle of the block). Two tall towers with 100 to 200 condos replaced a two-story motel.
- Polk and Pacific (southwest corner). A 5-story apartment building replaced a car repair facility.
- Polk between Washington and Jackson (next to our building). A 4-story condo building replaced a 1-story building that had two businesses.
- Polk and Pacific (southeast corner). A proposed 5-story, multi-unit condo building will replace two one-story buildings and a parking lot.
- Polk and Washington (southwest corner). A 5-story apartment or condo building was constructed several years ago, but I can't remember what was there before.
- Pacific between Polk and Larkin (middle of block). A small 3- or 4-story apartment or condo building is being proposed.

It's obvious that in recent years the neighborhood density has doubled (the number of people who lived within these four-square blocks live here now), with all the impacts that has caused. Please study, measure and mitigate those impacts before 48 more units to this already

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4) **Finding:**

The PUBLIC NOTICE Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Report for 1645 Pacific Avenue Project Planning Department Case No. 2007.0519E State Clearinghouse No. 2008102012 is undated so we are unable to verify if it was posted and delivered under legal minimums required under the CEQA and City time requirements.

38

5) **Comments and Questions about the DEIR and notice:**

We would like to remind the commission that since a discretionary act is involved this project can be denied. The Cities tendency is to forget the power granted it by the people to exercise it's full range of powers and instead tends to only use it's powers that keep entitlement projects moving forward, regardless of neighborhood concern.

From the original DEIR notice:

“The project sponsor would request approval by the Planning Commission of a Conditional Use authorization for development on lots greater than 10,000 square feet (*Planning Code* Section 121.1) and an exception from the bulk requirements (Section 271).”

We interpret that to mean the plan as submitted can be denied. Is this the understanding of the Staff and Commission as it applies to this project? Beside 3 pages in the DEIR (which do not study the “no project alternative” at all) are we assume that since only 3 pages out of 268 pages in the DEIR, about 1%, that the no-alternative – by design and study , has only a 1% chance of occurring. That none of the no-alternative benefits were studied. Does this meet the requirements in time and study for City and CEQA study for this project?

Does approval of this project mean that that staff and Commission have reviewed and studied the effects of the no-alternative project? Or has the City failed to even develop some standards for measuring the no-alternative project?

We support the comment and conclusion they made in the NOP by the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association that stated:

“Bulk Exception: We are concerned with the exceptional bulk of 1645 Pacific and its adverse impact on the historic Polk. Street neighborhood and the recently down-zoned Pacific Avenue Neighborhood. The overbearing scale, because of the project's excessive height and bulk will dominate the existing small scale and grain of Pacific Avenue, and will result in a negative impact on the character of our neighborhood.

The developer is asking for a special exception for bulk to the Planning Code. The developer is asking for a 28% extension of the diagonal (160 feet instead of 125 feet allowable). This increase in dimension will compound the bulk and excessively increase the mass of an already enormous mid-rise on a small-scale street. No matter how tastefully designed, this building will be out of character with Pacific Avenue and the prevailing character of the Polk Street and Pacific Avenue Neighborhoods.

**Section 271 of the San Francisco Code: Bulk Limits clearly states that ... *There may be some exceptional cases in which these limits may properly be permitted to be exceeded to a certain degree; however, following public review and exploration of alternatives,***

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*provided there are adequate compensating factors. Such deviation might occur, when the criteria of this section are met, for one of the following reasons:*

*1) Achievement of a distinctively better design, in both a public and private sense, than would be possible with strict adherence to the bulk limits, avoiding an unnecessary prescription of building form while carrying out the intent of the bulk limits and the principles and policies of the Master Plan.*

*2) Development of a building or structure with widespread public service benefits and significance to the community at large, when compelling functional requirements of the specific building or structure make necessary such a deviation.*

There were no public reviews, scoping sessions, or development of alternatives nor are there compensation factors regarding the request for this exemption. There are no immediate public service benefits provided by the developer to the community at large or small. The builder is, on the contrary, electing to remove public services such as merchant parking and a service business. The developer is providing no housing units that reflect the demographics of the neighborhood and the developer is exporting the **required moderate income apartments** to the Mayor's in-lieu fee, which has a seven year percolation period and yields no contribution to the neighborhood community.”

We do not find that the DEIR has provided support for the granting of the Bulk Limits entitlement.

**6) The Buildings are a Historic Resource.**

The NOP for the EIR identified the building/area as potential contribution to a National Historic District neighborhood. Specifically the NOP stated:

**“Cultural and Paleontological Resources:** The EIR will analyze potential impacts on prehistoric and historic archaeological resources, and on historic architectural resources. It appears that development of the project site began at the end of the 19th century, and by the close of the century a building had been constructed on the site (1645 Pacific Avenue) and occupied by the San Francisco Riding Academy. The 1645 Pacific Avenue building was repaired after the 1906 earthquake and fire, and was subsequently altered. The 1661 Pacific Avenue building has been determined to be contributory to a potential Van Ness Avenue Auto Row Historic District. The EIR will evaluate the potential historic and architectural significance of the existing buildings on the project site (1645 and 1661 Pacific Avenue).”

It is unclear why the Patrick McGrew, McGREW/ARCHITECTURE, *Historic Resource Evaluation Report, 1645 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, California*, was not included in the DEIR or made easily available online. **Such a critical document, and part of the only alternative considered, should have been included for broad public review and comment.**

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WE have learned that the Mc Grew report was not an independent third party report and in fact was commission by the applicant and done prior to the submission of his application. As such we must dismiss its findings as bought findings and request an independent study of the sites.

The applicant brags about this in their SHAC application (attached) stating:

“Our original plan called for the demolition of the structure at 1661 Pacific. Prior to acquisition of the development site, we had a historic resource report done by Patrick McGrew.”

The SAN FRANCISCO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION 12/2/2009 minutes state:

**“1645 Pacific Avenue Project, - Review and Comments on the Draft Environment Impact Report** on the proposed project would demolish the existing two-story, 27,275 sq.ft. commercial building (1645 Pacific Ave), retain the front façade of the adjacent building (1661 Pacific Ave.) and construct a new six-story, 65-foot-tall residential and retail building located on a block bounded by Pacific and Van Ness Avenues and Jackson and Polk Streets (Assessor’s Block 0595, Lot 013). The existing 1661 Pacific Ave. building is a contributor to the Van Ness Auto Row District. *Preliminary Recommendation: The Historic Preservation Commission will discuss the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to frame their written comments on the adequacy of the DEIR, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).*

Commission Martinez: Commented that 3 stories instead or 4 on top of 1661 would be part of the mitigation.

Commission Wolfram: Commented that the historic resource report could be more thorough. There was very little visual documentation to back up some statements that were made in the report. Some interpretation could be made in the lobby of the building that talks about the Riding Academy and its history.

Commissioner Matsuda: Commented on the consideration of another preservation alternative. In addition there should be at least an interpretive sign or documentation included in this new project.

Commissioner Hasz: Maybe there could be more than one preservation alternative.

Commissioner Chase: Commented that the project sponsor should/could make a gesture through mitigation measures to interpret that period of evolution of these buildings. The Page and Turnbull memorandum should be part of this documentation reviewed by the public.

**SPEAKERS:**

James Joannides – Resident at Polk and Washington Neighborhood - expressed concern about the scale of the project and the cultural resources along this part of the automobile repair row.

Dawn Trenneert – Middle Polk Neighborhood Association – expressed the need to preserve the historic nature and highlights of the area as new projects come into the Auto Row Historic District.”

Since the City has this commission it should be required to send it concerns about the DEIR in order for the City to complete it’s study of the projects CEQA requirements. The City exists as a single entity under law and cannot just say that the right hand can ignore the left hand when it suits them (cannot claim ignorance as an excuse).

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We disagree with the finding the project would have less-than-significant effects on historical resources. We would however support the mitigation in this matter for an enhanced preservation alternative as environmentally superior to the proposed application in this matter. } 21  
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**7) Is the project we are responding to the actual project**

In the Applicants application to the SFHAC ENDORSEMENT APPLICATION (copy attached) they stated the building has been re-designed as of October, 2009. How do those revisions affect the DEIR? Is the project we are responding to the actual project? } 42

**8) Affordable Housing**

Support for affordable housing in the Applicants application (copy attached) to the SFHAC ENDORSEMENT APPLICATION they state:  
"We will pay the affordable housing in lieu fee for the project. However, projected proforma sales prices of the 26 studio apartments range from \$526,000 to \$586,000 providing a relatively affordable price point for housing in the neighborhood. They are affordable by design."  
Can nothing be done but the use of "fee" to dismiss housing impacts should be decided project by project. The development of a City for the Rich exclusively was never intended by the California codes requirements for affordable housing. The placement of nearly 100% of affordable housing in poor neighborhood should not be allowed. } 18

**9) Existing Use as a Public Parking Garage**

No study was made about the specific and cumulative loss of the public parking that supports neighborhood residents and retail. } 29

**10) Neighborhood Serving Auto Facilities**

No study was made of the cumulative effects of the loss of neighborhood auto serving facilities. When the last gas station and repair facility is gone from the neighborhood/city – what will that mean? Will it be studied then? Until cars no longer exist these type of facilities need preserved at all costs. } 11

**11) Recycling**

No study was made of the location and easy resident use for all the recycling requirements imposed and proposed by the City for batteries, cardboard, cans, wet waste, etc. } 33

**12) Rooftop**

The DEIR on page 25 lists as part of the project:  
"excluding 16 feet of the Penthouse."

Is there to be a penthouse for this project or not? Or is the roof pad merely the foundation for the wink and nod "Penthouse" to be added later. Or does the penthouse fall under the city onsite square footage allowance changes allowed by the building Department? Since it has been mentioned in the project as part of the project has it been backdoored allowed? Since this is not clear the penthouse should be prohibited as a mitigation measure.

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**13) The project in the NOP differs significantly from the project as described in the DEIR.**

Could you please provide a list of differences between the two projects and what impact that has on the approval and public notification processes?

42

In a city that has approved about 1000-2000+ residential units a year in the boom times of the 2000's this project should not be evaluated as little impact on this neighborhood when it could be as much as 5% of all units approved in the City this year. Growth is not "inevitable" nor is it good for neighborhood and communities. The DEIR has not identified a single benefit this project brings to this neighborhood. It slights neighborhood concerns about it's impacts. It moves forward a process granting substantial entitlements to a single person while depriving many of any action on their behalf.

43

**We request that the DEIR not be certified and that it be sent back for additional study and mitigation.**

39

Sincerely Yours,

*Mark Whisler*

**Mark Whisler EA, RMP, ABR, MBR**

*Broker Owner- Whisler Land Company  
Enrolled Agent- Whisler Financial Group*

**2509 Capitol Ave Suite 100**

**Sacramento, CA 95816**

**916-446-6666 ext 6**

**Fax 916-446-2136**

**Whisler Land Company**

The information contained in this electronic message from Mark Whisler, EA, RMP, ABR, MBR, and any attachments, contains information that may be confidential and/or privileged. If you are not the intended

## SFHAC ENDORSEMENT APPLICATION

**Project Sponsor:** 1645 Pacific Avenue LLC, an affiliate of Nick Podell Company

**Location of Project:** 1645 Pacific Avenue

**Brief Project Description: (uses, height, unit mix, etc)**

The proposed project is a 6 story 48-unit residential condominium with 3,625 square feet of ground floor retail on Pacific. The proposed building is 65 feet in height. The unit mix is currently 26 studio's, 5 one-bedroom units, 13 two-bedroom units and 3 three-bedroom units.

**Project Architect:** BDE Architects, Jon Ennis (415) 394-6978

**Existing Zoning: (height and use):**

The project is in the Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial District. It is in the 65-A height and bulk district.

The existing project site has a 2 story concrete commercial structure with automotive use at 1645 Pacific and a 1-story wood frame structure with an automotive use at 1661 Pacific. The site is one lot, Lot 13 of Block 0595. The San Francisco Planning Department has identified 1661 Pacific as a contributing ancillary structure to the potential Van Ness Auto Row Historic District. The proposed project is not subject to review by the new Historic Preservation Commission.

**Exceptions, Variances, Conditional Use Approvals and Code Changes Requested:**

The underlying zoning allows up to 79 units as-of-right and buildings up to 65 feet in height. The lot is 15,775 square feet. The Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial District requires Conditional Use approval for all projects on lots over 10,000 square feet. We are requesting an exception to the Bulk guidelines above 40' for superior design as discussed below. No other exceptions are sought.

**Approval Schedule:** DEIR is to be published 10/21/09 or 10/28/09; conditional use hearing in Spring 2010.

**Project Planner Assigned:** Kevin Guy 558-6163

**Environmental Review Planner:** Brett Bollinger 575-9024

**The following guidelines will be used to evaluate the project. Under each guideline, please indicate briefly whether and how the project meets the guideline:**

**Land Use: Housing should be an appropriate use of the site given the context of the surrounding neighborhood and should enhance neighborhood livability.**

To the east of the site along Pacific are two 5 story, 50' high multifamily housing buildings. The building immediately to the east does not have retail on the ground floor. To the South of the project site is 1650 Jackson, a 9 story multifamily housing building. Our project will impact the private views from 1650 Jackson. To the west of the site are 1 and 2 story commercial buildings in the Van Ness Avenue Special Use District. The height and bulk district immediately to the west of the site is 80-D.

The project site is a half level block off the Polk Street corridor. It is within 3 blocks of Real Foods & Big Apple grocers, Walgreens, Brownies and Cole Hardware stores, and dozens of café's, restaurants and shops. Per the San Francisco Bike Coalition's Bike Map and Walking Guide, the project site has a unique topographic location that makes it an easy grade to walk/bike to Cow Hollow, the Marina, and the Presidio.

The surrounding neighborhood is predominately residential, mixed use and some commercial. The additional housing will contribute to the vitality of the Polk Street commercial district by constructing multi-family residential units above ground floor retail. Hopefully, the additional retail will expand the neighborhood commercial opportunities.

**Density: The project should have the maximum housing unit density allowable under current zoning for the project site. Extra support may be given to projects that further propose increased density above the base zoning, particularly in areas that are transit accessible.**

The Polk Street NCD allows 1 unit per 400 square feet of lot size. This would allow 39 units on the site. Because we are immediately adjacent to RC-4 zoning to the west, the code allows RC-4 density of 200 square feet of lot size. The proposed project is 48 units. Given the height limit and size of the lot, and limited ability to provide bedroom windows based on the site's mid-block location, we have fit as many units as is feasible into the allowed building envelope.

**Affordability: The SFHAC recognizes that the need for affordable housing in San Francisco is a critical problem and gives preference to projects that propose creative ways to improve unit affordability. Projects that include below market rate units above the legally mandated minimums will receive special support.**

We will pay the affordable housing in lieu fee for the project. However, projected proforma sales prices of the 26 studio apartments range from \$526,000 to \$586,000 providing a relatively affordable price point for housing in the neighborhood.

They are affordable by design.

**Transit Orientation and Parking:** In districts where the minimum parking requirement is one parking space per residential unit (1:1) or more, the SFHAC will not, except in extraordinary circumstances, support a project with parking in excess of 1:1. In districts where the minimum parking requirement is less than 1:1, SFHAC will only support additional parking up to 1:1 if the need for additional is clearly established. The SFHAC prefers creative strategies to reduce the need for parking, such as transit linkages, bicycle storage, provision of space for car-share vehicles on-site or nearby, and un-bundling parking cost from residential unit cost.

The project has 1:1 parking spaces per unit, all in "Klaus" stackers. The parking spaces will be un-bundled from the unit sales. The project has space for 24 bikes in the secure underground garage. In addition, there is 1 car-share parking space for exclusive use of the project residents, inside the projects garage.

The Project is ½ block off the proposed Van Ness BRT line and the existing Van Ness transportation system. The 12 Folsom stops ½ a block away on the corner of Pacific & Van Ness. The 19 Polk stops ½ a block away on Polk at Pacific.

City Car Share has 6 vehicles ½ block a way from the site and Zip Car has 9 vehicles ½ a block to 1 block away.

**Preservation:** If there are structures of significant historic or cultural merit on the site, their retention and/ or incorporation into the project is encouraged. If such structures are to be demolished, there should be compelling reasons for doing so.

Our original plan called for the demolition of the structure at 1661 Pacific. Prior to acquisition of the development site, we had a historic resource report done by Patrick McGrew. Mr. McGrew found that neither building on the site qualified as an historic resource pursuant to CEQA. Planning Staff disagreed and identified 1661 Pacific as a contributing ancillary structure to the potential Van Ness Auto Row Historic District. We entirely redesigned the project to incorporate the façade and first 15 feet of depth of 1661 Pacific. Planning staff has reviewed our present design and issued HRER 2007.0519E, concurring that "the project at 1645 Pacific Avenue is compatible with the district in terms of its height, scale, massing, fenestration pattern, and other features. Its design reflects the varied architectural styles of the district and shall not have a significant adverse impact upon the Van Ness Auto Row District".

**Design:** The project should promote principles of good urban design: pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly site planning; contextual design such as compatibility of style, scale and facades with existing neighborhood character where appropriate; increased density while maintaining compatibility with streetscape and neighborhood scale. We expect design treatments to protect the pedestrian realm, with curb cuts minimized and active ground floor uses provided.

The project has a highly articulated bulk massing. By preserving the relevant portions of 1661 Pacific, we've created in effect, 2 masses. 1645 Pacific will be replaced with a

traditional 6 story residential structure with overtly ornamental storefront treatment, carrying up into the design motif of the building. 1661 Pacific will be the project garage entry. Rising behind the preserved façade 15' back will be a brick clad industrial warehouse design echoing similar buildings and materials used in the historic district.

Due to the addition of the Pacific Avenue retail & the preservation of the 1661 Pacific façade we lost 4 residential units with the new plan. However, we feel that the new plan is superior to the original bulk conforming plan, by creating a more animated pedestrian experience and breaking up the mass of the bulk as seen from the street.

**Greening and Energy Efficiency: Extra consideration will be given to projects that incorporate energy efficient materials and green building principles.**

We are planning on a LEED Gold building. The project has been accepted into the City's LEED Gold expedited permitting process.

**Community Input: Projects for which the developer has made a good faith effort to communicate to the community and to address legitimate neighborhood concerns, without sacrificing SFHAC's objectives, will receive more SFHAC support.**

We have met with the Mid Polk Neighborhood Association prior to each submission to the Planning Department. We have given them our submission material prior to giving it to Planning Staff. At each meeting, we've told the neighborhood that we are open to all of their ideas and concerns, however, we intend on submitting a 65' building at the highest density we can effectively fit on the site.

We have made the following changes to the project after neighborhood input:

Revisions made to project in response to community concerns  
October 2009

**Concern:** No retail facing Pacific Avenue

**Response:** Four retail storefronts have been added to the Pacific Avenue frontage

**Concern:** Above-ground parking

**Response:** All parking has been moved to a below-grade garage, with 1 parking space per unit, 1 car share space and plentiful bicycle parking.

This change in combination with the addition of retail resulted in 5-1/2 stories of housing rather than 6 and the loss of approximately 3,500 sq. ft. of residential space.

**Concern:** Consider preserving façade of 1661 Pacific building

**Response:** Façade and first 15 feet of 1661 Pacific building will be preserved and integrated into the new structure, with a distinctive "industrial" design above the preserved façade.

We broke up the mass of the building into two wings: the residential wing and the industrial garage wing. The residential wing skin will be cement plaster with formed stone detailing. The industrial wing skin will be brick.

Concern: Design was not appropriate

Response: The building was redesigned in consultation with Page & Turnbull, Preservation Architects. The architecture now features a highly articulated façade, high quality materials, and multiple setbacks. A full 32-foot rear yard has been proposed (25% of the lot depth).

note: could not let this pass,

Concern: Building is too dense

this is simply not true - mark

Response: Existing zoning allows up to 79 units as-of-right. We propose only 48 units. Conditional use approval is required only because the lot is over 10,000 square feet and to modify the bulk of the top three floors to produce a better design.

Concern: Building is too tall

Response: Existing height limit is 65 feet, with which the building complies. That height is the minimum necessary to build a 6-story structure with ground-floor retail. The elevator penthouse is as short and compact as code permits while still providing ADA access to the roof deck, which provides required open space for residents. The building is 2 stories lower than 1650 Jackson.

Concern: Comments on the scope of the EIR focused on density, scale, height and bulk, zoning compliance, neighborhood character, visual impacts, views, historic resources, traffic and transportation, noise, air quality, wind, shadows, and hazardous materials.

Response: The Draft EIR is scheduled to be published on October 21 or 28, 2009. It will analyze each of these topics, determine whether any impacts are significant, and propose mitigation measures to reduce any significant impacts disclosed.



**December 2, 2009**

**SAN FRANCISCO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Hearing Room 400**

**City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place**

**Wednesday, December 2, 2009**

**12:30 P.M.**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**Regular Meeting**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chase, Matsuda, Hasz, Martinez, Wolfram**

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Damkroger and Buckley**

**THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY PRESIDENT CHASE AT 12:40 P.M.**

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:** Tina Tam – Preservation Coordinator, Angela Threadgill, B. Bollinger, and Linda Avery – Commission Secretary

Commission Secretary Linda Avery: Announced that we have received the digital recorder and will be testing it today. We hope to have it operational at our next hearing on December 16 with public access on December 17. We will keep you posted.

**A. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**SPEAKERS:**

Anthony Poplawski – President, Secretary, & Treasurer of the Marin Fireman Union Headquarters, re: Opposed listing their building as a landmark under Article 10.

Peter Warfield – Library Users Association (LUA), re: Announced Sunshine Ordinance Task Force took up minutes of the April 8 and August 19 hearing based on complaint filed by the LUA.

Bradley Wiedmaier – District 6 Resident, re: Asked for HPC collective support for 2750 Vallejo Street at the Board of Supervisors (BOS) hearing.

**B. STAFF REPORT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Preservation Coordinator Tina Tam:**

Two samples of resolutions for recognition of services of Landmarks Board members were sent to the Commission.

Chief Finance Officer Elaine Forbes will return in January to listen to HPC priorities and wish list for your Work Program and Budget for the next fiscal year, which begins in 7/1/10.

The cost estimates, based on a 10 year study (since 1999), the average staff time to process landmark designations from initiation to adoption at the BOS for a simple, basic, small scale property with support from owners and community support was 40 – 60 hours, roughly \$3,000 of staff time. For historic districts with multiple properties like the Music Concourse and Dogpatch, the average cost was roughly 300 hours, roughly \$31,000. An individual landmark as the Metro Theater at 2055 Union Street, staff time was 125 hours, roughly \$11,000. It is not a large or complicated building, but it took multiple hearings at the Landmark Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB), the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), the Planning Commission (PC), Land Use Committee, and the BOS.

The \$44,000 Elaine Forbes mentioned in her presentation at the last hearing did not take into consideration time already spent on discussion of initiation for Appleton and Wolfard Libraries or other requests the HPC asked of staff. Based on staff efforts already spent, what's left is roughly \$30,000 for the HPC between now and 6/30/10.

1. Training/Information Presentation – Landmark Tree Program (Hui: 415/355-3731)

Urban Forest Coordinator for the Department of Environment by May Ling Hui: Ms. Hui gave a powerpoint presentation on the Landmark Tree Program.

Commission Wolfram asked what is the process to nominate a tree. The HPC could discuss whether they think a tree is worthy or not; assemble a nomination packet; maybe adopt a resolution, send a picture of the tree; and send all that information to her.

Commission Matsuda asked what would be a cultural tree. A historic tree is having importance to people who used to live here. A cultural tree has importance to people who are living here now. The official City tree across from McLaren Lodge is the City's annual Christmas tree. That is an example of a tree with current cultural significance.

### **C. MATTERS OF THE COMMISSION**

2. Consideration of Adoption:

· Draft minutes of Architectural Review Committee meeting of November 4, 2009

**ACTION:** Item continued to December 16, 2009 for corrections and summary of comments from the public

**AYES:** Hasz, Martinez, Wolfram, Matsuda, Chase

**ABSENT:** Buckley and Damkroger

3 President's Report and Announcements

None

#### 4 Commission Comments/Questions

Commissioner Martinez suggested to agendaize for consideration a letter of support regarding the CEQA Categorical Exemption (Cat. Ex) appeal for 2750 Vallejo Street at the BOS hearing on 12/15/09. Preservation Coordinator Tina Tam will provide a copy of material prepared for the BOS hearing to the HPC Commissioners for review at the next HPC hearing.

NOTE: Holiday party set for the evening of December 16, following the hearing. The location is still to be determined.

#### **D. CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS PROPOSED FOR CONTINUANCE**

The Commission will consider a request for continuance to a later date. The Commission may choose to continue the item to the date proposed below, to continue the item to another date, or to hear the item on this calendar.

5. 2009.0948A (A. Threadgill: 415/558-6602)

760 Market Street, The "Phelan Building," corner of O'Farrell and Market Streets, in Assessor's Block 0328, Lot 001. **Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness** to install business signage (dba *Walgreens*). The property is Landmark No. 156 and is rated as Category I (Significant) within the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District. It is within the C-3-R (Downtown Retail) Zoning District, in an 80-130-F Height and Bulk District, and is also within the Market Street Special Sign District.

*Preliminary Recommendation: Approval with Conditions*

*(Continued from Regular Meeting of November 4, 2009.)*

**(Proposed for Continuance to December 16, 2009)**

**ACTION:** Continued to December 16, 2009

**AYES:** Hasz, Martinez, Wolfram, Matsuda, Chase

**ABSENT:** Buckley and Damkroger

**SPEAKERS:** None

#### **E. CONSENT CALENDAR**

6. 2009.1022A (A. Starr: 415/558-6362)

819 Grove Street - (Assessor's Block 0804; Lots 023) south side between Fillmore Street and Webster Street. The subject property is a contributing structure to the Alamo Square Historic District. It is located within a RH-3 (Residential, House, Three-Family) Zoning District and 50-X Height and Bulk District. The proposal is a request for a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for a rear horizontal addition.

*Recommendation: Approval*

**SPEAKERS:** None

**ACTION:** Approved as recommended.

**AYES:** Hasz, Martinez, Wolfram, Matsuda, Chase

**ABSENT:** Buckley and Damkroger

**MOTION NO:** 0038

**F. REGULAR CALENDAR**

7. 2007.0519E (B. Bollinger: 415/575-9024)

1645 Pacific Avenue Project, - **Review and Comments on the Draft Environment Impact Report** on the proposed project would demolish the existing two-story, 27,275 sq.ft. commercial building (1645 Pacific Ave), retain the front façade of the adjacent building (1661 Pacific Ave.) and construct a new six-story, 65-foot-tall residential and retail building located on a block bounded by Pacific and Van Ness Avenues and Jackson and Polk Streets (Assessor's Block 0595, Lot 013). The existing 1661 Pacific Ave. building is a contributor to the Van Ness Auto Row District. *Preliminary Recommendation: The Historic Preservation Commission will discuss the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to frame their written comments on the adequacy of the DEIR, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).*

Commissioner Martinez: Commented that 3 stories instead of 4 on top of 1661 would be part of the mitigation.

Commissioner Wolfram: Commented that the historic resource report could be more thorough. There was very little visual documentation to back up some statements that were made in the report. Some interpretation could be made in the lobby of the building that talks about the Riding Academy and its history.

Commissioner Matsuda: Commented on the consideration of another preservation alternative. In addition there should be at least an interpretive sign or documentation included in this new project.

Commissioner Hasz: Maybe there could be more than one preservation alternative.

Commissioner Chase: Commented that the project sponsor should/could make a gesture through mitigation measures to interpret that period of evolution of these buildings. The Page and Turnbull memorandum should be part of this documentation reviewed by the public.

**SPEAKERS:**

James Joannides – Resident at Polk and Washington Neighborhood - expressed concern about the scale of the project and the cultural resources along this part of the automobile repair row.

Dawn Trenneer – Middle Polk Neighborhood Association – expressed the need to preserve the historic nature and highlights of the area as new projects come into the Auto Row Historic District.

**ACTION:** None - Action is not required on this item

**Adjournment: 1:43 P.M.**

The minutes was proposed for adoption at the Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission on Wednesday, December 16, 2009.

ACTION: Approved

AYES: Buckley, Hasz, Martinez, Matsuda, Wolfram, Damkroger, Chase

The minutes was proposed for adoption at the Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission on Wednesday, November 18, 2009

ACTION: Approved

AYES: Buckley, Martinez, Matsuda, Wolfram, Damkroger, Chase

ABSENT: Hasz



San Francisco

# PIPELINE REPORT

San Francisco Planning Department  
June 2008



end, decided to keep these plans in for now in the interest of being inclusive.

Figure 4: Pipeline Project Applications and Residential Units Filed and Approved with the Planning Department, by Quarter

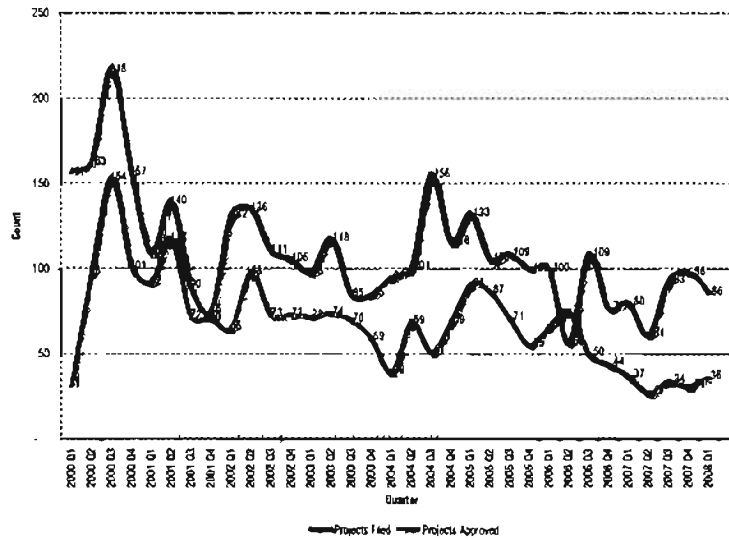
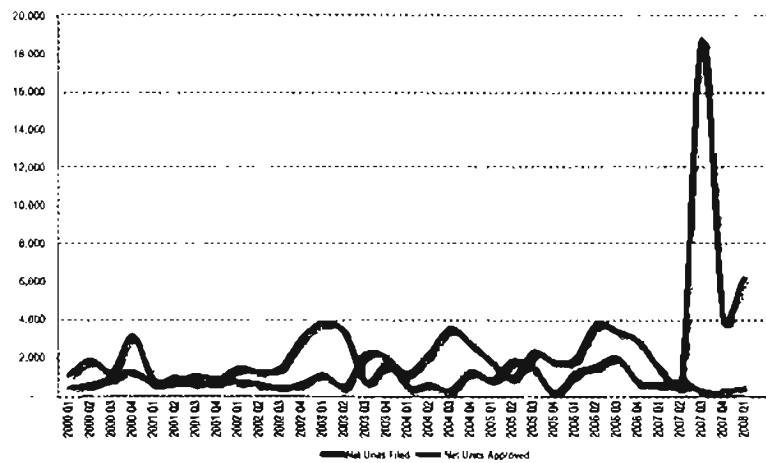


Figure 5: Pipeline Project Applications and Residential Units Filed and Approved by the Planning Department, by Quarter





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Appendix 2:  
TRANSCRIPT OF  
DRAFT EIR PUBLIC HEARING

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SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING COMMISSION

--oOo--

RE: 1645 PACIFIC AVENUE            )  
  ) Case No.  
  )  
  ) 2007.0519E  
  )  
  )

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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Thursday, December 10, 2009

City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 400  
San Francisco, CA

REPORTED BY: NIKI MAKELA, CSR 11024 424876

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 2</p> <p>1 --oOo-- 2 APPEARANCES 3 4 5 DURING ASSOCIATES 6 120 Montgomery Street, Suite 2290 7 San Francisco, Ca 94104 8 BY: STU DURING, ATTORNEY AT LAW 9 Telephone: 415-986-0884 10 11 SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING COMMISSION 12 President: Ron Miguel 13 Vice-President: Christina R. Olague 14 Commissioners: Michael J. Antonini 15 Gwynth Borden 16 William L. Lee 17 Kathrin Moore 18 Hisashi Sugaya 19 20 Commission Secretary: Linda D. Avery 21 22 Planning Department Staff: John Raham 23 Lawrence Badner 24 25</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p> <p>1 produce an accurate transcript. Also commenters should 2 state their name and address so that they can be 3 properly identified and they can be sent a copy of the 4 comments and responses when completed. 5 After hearing comments from the general 6 public, we will also take any comments on the draft EIR 7 by the Planning Commission. Public comment period for 8 this project began on November 18th, 2009, and will go 9 to January 2nd, 2009. 10 The Historical Preservation commission held a 11 hearing on the draft EIR on December 6th, 2009 -- 12 excuse me -- December 2nd, 2009. 13 This concludes the presentation on this 14 matter. Unless the Commission members have any 15 questions, I would respectfully suggest that the public 16 hearing be open to comment. Thank you. 17 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you. 18 Is there any public comment on this Item? 19 Excuse me. I have some cards. Let me call these names 20 first. 21 Dawn Trennert, Pat Sonnino, Frank Cannata. 22 MS. TRENNERT: Good afternoon, President 23 Miguel and Commissioners. Happy holidays to all of 24 you. My name is Dawn Trennert. I'm with the Middle 25 Polk Neighborhood Association. My address is 1561</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p> <p>1 San Francisco, California; Thursday, December 10, 2009 2 4:39 p.m. 3 --oOo-- 4 PROCEEDINGS 5 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Commissioners, you are 6 now on Item Number 12, Case Number 2007.0519E for 1645 7 Pacific Avenue. This is a public hearing on the Draft 8 Environmental Impact Report. 9 MR. BOLINGER: Good afternoon, President 10 Miguel, members of the Commission. I am Brett 11 Bolinger, Planning Department Staff, MEA Division. 12 This is a hearing to receive comments on the 13 draft EIR for Case Number 2007.0519E, the 1645 Pacific 14 Avenue project. Staff is not here to answer questions 15 today. Comments will be transcribed and responded to 16 in writing in the Comments and Responses document, 17 which will respond to all verbal and written comments 18 received and made revisions to draft EIR as 19 appropriate. 20 This is not a hearing to consider approval or 21 disapproval of the project. The hearing will follow 22 the final EIR certification. Comments today should be 23 directed to the adequacy and accuracy of information 24 contained in the draft EIR. Commenters should speak 25 slowly and clearly so that the court reporter can</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 5</p> <p>1 Sacramento Street, Number 4109. 2 I speak to you today regarding this DEIR 3 specifically regarding about the timing of this DEIR. 4 It came out on November 18th right before the 5 Thanksgiving holiday. I don't know about you all but I 6 was pretty busy around the Thanksgiving. And coming 7 here to the Historical Preservation Commission last 8 week and coming here today has been a bit difficult in 9 pulling things together, but I think you will see that 10 we have done a good job at that. 11 I am really concerned that the final deadline 12 for written comments is on January 2nd, literally the 13 day after the holidays. I think that puts undue stress 14 on the public and on everybody who is interested in 15 this project in having to rush to get something in. 16 I would prefer that we have a little bit more 17 time so that we could do a quality job in providing 18 comments, and I would ask for an extension of that 19 deadline. 20 Also I referenced that we were at the Historic 21 Preservation Commission last week and that Commission 22 thought that there was some significant lacking in 23 telling the complete story of the historic corner of 24 our neighborhood, its significance in Auto Row and the 25 significance of the buildings that are there today.</p>

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Page 6

1 Lastly, the buildings that are there today do  
 2 provide employment, much needed jobs that are there  
 3 that are very real today, and it would be a shame to  
 4 displace these jobs too early, too soon only to have to  
 5 wait for financing to become available for another  
 6 luxury condominium complex.  
 7 I thank you for your consideration of our  
 8 comments this afternoon and again happy holidays.  
 9 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you.  
 10 MS. SONNINO: Good afternoon, Commissioners.  
 11 My name is Pat Sonnino. I live at 1650 Jackson Street.  
 12 I would like to comment specifically on the DEIR  
 13 analysis of the visual character, specifically bulk.  
 14 The DEIR minimizes the impact of bulk on the character  
 15 on the Polk Street neighborhood.  
 16 First the report misrepresents the character  
 17 of the neighborhood and Pacific Avenue by over  
 18 emphasizing the characteristics of the Van Ness  
 19 corridor resulting in a non-objective and inaccurate  
 20 evaluation.  
 21 The DEIR states the proposed project will not  
 22 be expected to cause substantial and demonstrable  
 23 negative change or disrupt the existing visual  
 24 character of the project vicinity. Yet compared to  
 25 Pacific Avenue, the building height, size, and bulk are

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Page 7

1 overwhelming. The bulk and length exception the  
 2 project is seeking of will result in a domineering  
 3 building. The project would not even meet the Van Ness  
 4 corridor guidelines for bulk, and Van Ness is often  
 5 referred to in the report as a justification, but this  
 6 is a 100-foot wide street where the buildings are meant  
 7 to enclose the space.  
 8 The bulk guidelines are in place to avoid the  
 9 construction of projects of overwhelming scale to,  
 10 quote, help reduce the negative effects of development  
 11 on large sites.  
 12 The DEIR analysis is limited to the discussion  
 13 of height, not taking bulk into consideration,  
 14 misrepresenting the actual impact.  
 15 Neighborhoods are experienced street by  
 16 street. We encourage you to evaluate the proposed  
 17 1645 Pacific project in the context of Pacific Avenue.  
 18 It is a practice of developers of large sites  
 19 to ask for bulk exceptions. These overly large  
 20 projects compound their effects on the neighborhood  
 21 character. I suggest that the DEIR has overlooked the  
 22 delicate balance of the Polk Street neighborhood and  
 23 has not accurately portrayed the cumulative impact of  
 24 these large projects on the fragile character of this  
 25 area. Thank you.

1 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you.  
 2 MR. CANNATA: Good afternoon, Commissioners.  
 3 My name is Frank Cannata. I am also with the Middle  
 4 Polk Neighborhood Association. I live at 1561  
 5 Sacramento Street. The site of this proposed project  
 6 is an area I go by every day of my life in  
 7 San Francisco.  
 8 Pat just talked about bulk. I want to talk  
 9 about height. It is our belief that the DEIR is  
 10 misleading and inadequate in describing this proposed  
 11 project and the character of the neighborhood in  
 12 regards to height.  
 13 Some of these inadequacies are on page 32 and  
 14 37. There are references to six-story building  
 15 approved for the southeast corner of Polk and Pacific,  
 16 which is 1932 to 46 Polk and 1667 to 1675 Pacific.  
 17 This Commission approved that building sometime earlier  
 18 this year, and the approval was for a five-story  
 19 building with significant setbacks, 12-foot setbacks on  
 20 both Polk and Pacific.  
 21 On page 36, the DEIR states the proposed  
 22 building is compatible in size of the buildings that  
 23 exist in the area. This is not true. It will be one  
 24 of the few six-story buildings in Polk NCD with all  
 25 other ones of six or more stories being corner

1 buildings.  
 2 Page 37 references an approved seven-story  
 3 building on Broadway between Van Ness and Franklin.  
 4 This was a totally misleading reference because the  
 5 proposed building is not in the Polk Street NCD and it  
 6 is west of Van Ness where taller buildings are  
 7 generally more accepted.  
 8 Page 40 compares the proposed six-story  
 9 building to existing five-story buildings as being  
 10 similar in height. Now, one floor compared to a  
 11 five-story building is 20 percent increase. To me,  
 12 that is not comparable in height.  
 13 The proposed building would be the tallest  
 14 building on Pacific Avenue from Van Ness to Polk. This  
 15 is a middle-of-the-block building where the corner  
 16 buildings on Polk and Pacific are one five-story and  
 17 one, I believe, two-story building.  
 18 Buildings in Polk Street NCD from California  
 19 to Union, so that is five blocks on either side  
 20 approximately, generally range from two to  
 21 four stories. It's about 80 percent of the buildings  
 22 with some five-story buildings and a few six and taller  
 23 buildings, but all the buildings that are six stories  
 24 or taller are all corner buildings.  
 25 For these reasons, we believe the DEIR is

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	Page 10	Page 12		
15	<p>1 totally inadequate in its representation of how this                  2 building compares height wise to our neighborhood.                  3 Thank you.                  4 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you.                  5 Jon Faust, James Joannides, Michael Schoolnik.                  6 MR. FAUST: Hello, Commissioners. My name is                  7 John Faust. I live at 1650 Jackson Street. I'm part                  8 of the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association. I would                  9 like to comment a little bit about Section 5 of the                  10 DEIR, the section entitled, "Environmental Setting and                  11 Impacts."                  12 So first off I want to start off more                  13 specifically on Section 5A, the Land Use Character                  14 Impact Analysis, which begins on page 36. The document                  15 states that although the project would intensify the                  16 use of the project site, it would be compatible with                  17 the existing dense characters of Pacific Avenue, Polk                  18 Street, and Van Ness corridor in the project vicinity                  19 as well as compatible with the size, character, and                  20 mixed uses that exist in the area.                  21 While I think it is a fair statement to say                  22 that about the Van Ness corridor, I don't think it is                  23 when you are talking about either Pacific Avenue or the                  24 Polk Street corridor. We heard some comments from                  25 Mr. Canada and also from Pat about mass bulk and height</p>	<p>1 the street, which is where the project is located.                  2 They don't show the north side of street which is                  3 comprised of mainly one- and two-story buildings                  4 30 feet high.                  5 So what you've got already is two five-story                  6 projects on the corner on the south side and then you                  7 have the proposed project, which is even larger, but on                  8 the other side of the street you basically have 30-foot                  9 high buildings.                  10 So I think the DEIR should really take                  11 reference to that to point out what is on the north                  12 side of the street when talking about compatibility in                  13 the neighborhood overall.                  14 Lastly also in --                  15 (Buzzer rings.)                  16 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you.                  17 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Q. Good afternoon,                  18 Commissioners. I'm James Joannides. I live at                  19 1740 Polk Street. I'm here to address some of the                  20 errors and omissions in the Draft Environmental Impact                  21 Report.                  22 The report uses sort of a boiler plate                  23 (inaudible) Van Ness plan to describe the character of                  24 Polk Street. I guess it was from the (inaudible)                  25 associates, and they didn't generate specific history</p>	17	
12	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p> <p>1 in the area. They commented on the fact that this                  2 project would be one of the few six-story buildings in                  3 the neighborhood. So, to say that is compatible with                  4 both Polk Street and Pacific Avenue corridors, I don't                  5 think is factual. Although, it could be when talking                  6 about Van Ness.                  7 I'd also like to comment on Section 5B, which                  8 is the Visual Character Impact Analysis heading which                  9 begins on page 45. The document states the visual                  10 character and mass of the proposed project would be                  11 similar to the long-term modern and historical                  12 structures in the vicinity to the west and south on                  13 Van Ness Avenue and Jackson Street respectively.                  14 So again I think the document is making                  15 references to the buildings in the Van Ness corridor                  16 neither of which mind you are visible from Pacific                  17 Avenue. So it is really a differences of what you see                  18 on the street versus on the block. So if you are there                  19 in the neighborhood, you are really looking at the                  20 street scape as opposed to what is on the block.                  21 I've also found this interest -- I don't know                  22 if I can share a picture here. It's actually in the                  23 DEIR. It is probably a little bit difficult to see,                  24 but what you can tell is that, you know, the pictures                  25 here in the DEIR are only focused on the south side of</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p> <p>1 or background of Polk, which is a very small-scale                  2 street.                  3 And secondly, they did not acknowledge or                  4 consult with the author of the recent rezoning of                  5 Pacific Avenue just a half a block away. They rezoned                  6 to preserve the historic character of Pacific Avenue                  7 and did a whole cultural and historical inventory which                  8 would have been a good basis of the report, and I                  9 believe SECA -- I don't know which section, but it does                  10 require you to sort of reach out to other agencies who                  11 have done these sort of reports.                  12 The Historic Preservation Commission last week                  13 was disappointed that there weren't illustrations. I                  14 have something here, and there was a poverty of them                  15 and then there wasn't a -- there was a lack of                  16 reasonable alternatives to SECA mentioned, such as                  17 smaller -- they talked specifically about smaller                  18 basins over the little building and perhaps bringing                  19 the other building down a story so that it wouldn't                  20 shadow the building across the street and would be on                  21 the same height as the two contemporary buildings right                  22 next to it.                  23 This is the sort of transitional advertisement                  24 for one of the occupants of the building. As you can                  25 see, they do -- originally, it had been a stables and</p>	23	
17			<p>24</p> <p>34</p> <p>22</p>	

22	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 14</p> <p>1 an electric car garage, and then a garage called Ben 2 Hur Stables. They do both smithing -- they are still 3 doing smithing, but they are also doing contemporary 4 automobile repair including DUCO enameling which is a 5 very special process.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 16</p> <p>1 first-time buyers making them the most active commuters 2 needing simultaneous ingress and egress the early 3 morning and late evening commuter hours. The DEIR does 4 not include market research trending for studio 5 residences in San Francisco that would support the 6 demand for one-to-one parking. If an increase in car 7 share spaces is the growing trend, as I suspect, that 8 would satisfy the City's initiatives for transit first.</p>	29
32	<p>6 One other illustration is right across the 7 street this is the original firehouse. There's a 8 firehouse there now which will be shadowed by the 9 project. This is a building, a stables very similar to 10 th original stables with the downfall over the street, 11 and there's a cable car house right there.</p>	<p>9 Lastly, one-to-one parking would result in 49 10 cars pulling in and out of the building which would 11 create significant traffic issues along Pacific. That 12 potential impact isn't in the DEIR, and I would suggest 13 it be an issue to explore.</p>	
28	<p>12 Anyway, that's my -- 13 (Buzzer Rings.) 14 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you. 15 MR. SCHOOLNIK: Commissioners, my name is 16 Michael Schoolnik. I live at 1569 Clay at Larkin. My 17 comments will be directed at Section 5 of the DEIR, 18 Transportation and Circulation, specifically the areas 19 that address Muni and parking impacts. 20 On page 70, under Muni's Transit Effectiveness 21 Project, the document identifies, quote, potential 22 changes to occur on mid 2009, end quote. 23 On November 9th, San Francisco Muni revised 24 service on specific bus lines covered in the documents. 25 Updated service changes are as follows: The One</p>	<p>14 Thank you very much. 15 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you. 16 Leslie Ball, Wylie Adams, Ann Thilges 17 MS. BALL: President and Commissioners, my 18 name is Leslie Ball, and I'm part of the Middle Polk 19 neighborhood. I live at 1650 Jackson Street. I would 20 like to speak on the character of the neighborhood. 21 The DEIR states on page 48 the demolition of 22 the approximate 27,275 square foot of automotive 23 service space on the site would result in displacement 24 of approximately nine existing employees, dot, dot, 25 dot. This loss would be offset by the proposed retail</p>	
29	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 15</p> <p>1 California, the 12 Folsom Pacific, the 19 Polk, the 2 27 Bryant, and the 47 Van Ness lines have had segments 3 eliminated plus frequency and service hours have been 4 reduced. Many buses now go downtown and do not go to 5 the Ferry Building, which will affect the volume of 6 traffic throughout the City. The 10 Townsend has been 7 rerouted along Pacific Avenue. And both the 8 10 Townsend and 12 Folsom Pacific now provide direct 9 service to the Financial District via Sansome Street. 10 This is a major change. 11 Given the revised Muni routes, I would suggest 12 that the DEIR be updated to reflect the cumulative 13 impact of these route and service changes. 14 On page 80 under "Parking Impacts," the 15 document cites 48 dwelling units with one-to-one 16 parking for all units, with the exception of one 17 parking space reserved for an independently acceptable 18 car-share space. I would suggest that a single car 19 share space never works. There must be two car share 20 spaces to make the service work; three of course works 21 better, and four spaces works even better than three. 22 I'm interested in the breakdown of the types 23 of residences planned and the line share being 26 24 studio units with one-to-one parking. One would assume 25 that these owner residence would be young, single,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p> <p>1 space which would accommodate approximately 10 new 2 employees. The Polk Street NCD is a 3 mixed-use neighborhood that includes a variety of 4 commercial spaces in addition to housing and retail. 5 The disappearance of these spaces and uses is 6 increasing as the development of speculative housing 7 projects displace them. 8 The proposed project demolishes 27,000 square 9 feet of high-bay commercial space and pushes out the 10 services businesses that occupy them along with the 11 nine jobs. Although the draft states that the retail 12 space for the new development included will replace the 13 jobs and services used will leave the neighborhood 14 forever and most likely seek more economic space 15 outside of the City. This will reduce the diversity of 16 the businesses in the historically mixed-use 17 neighborhood. 18 The community impact of the development trend 19 of replacing neighborhood commercial with speculative 20 housing will be the homogenization of our neighborhood 21 and the reduction of neighborhood services. 22 We suggest this is a highly undesirable 23 outcome especially in light of the increasingly high 24 vacancy rate in the residential properties in the City. 25 The impact of job reduction should be highlighted as a</p>	19

19	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p> <p>1 negative impact as well given that no new businesses 2 are being planned or proposed, merely space for 3 possible accommodations of unknown retail. The mix 4 commercial services used in Polk Street NCD is a 5 distinctive feature of the neighborhood character. 6 Historically at the service at garages and 7 similar businesses are in support of the automotive 8 showrooms on the Van Ness district. The (inaudible) 9 space also provides a kind of space necessary for 10 builders, suppliers, and similar businesses. 11 We suggest that the DEIR evaluate the need for 12 both the uses and type of space these (inaudible) 13 spaces provide, the cumulative, negative impact of 14 their demolition on the neighborhood's diversity and 15 services available in the City. Thank you. 16 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you. 17 MS. ADAMS: Good afternoon, Commissioners. My 18 name is Wylie Adams. I live at 1601 Sacramento Street 19 at Larkin. I am also part of the Middle Polk 20 Neighborhood Association. I wanted to address housing 21 today, and I recognize the DEIR is a pretty substantial 22 tool that you use to make your decision. I think this 23 area needs to be flushed out more in the final EIR. 24 Really quickly some facts and some data. 2006 25 to 2008 over half our population makes less than</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 20</p> <p>1 in the City, and I don't think it is the type of 2 housing that our neighborhood needs or the City needs. 3 Thank you. 4 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you. 5 MS. THILGES: Hello, Commissioners. My name 6 is Ann Thilges, and I'm part of the Middle Polk 7 Neighborhood Association. I live on Jackson Street at 8 1650. I'm going to speak to you today regarding the 9 project on scenic vistas and views. 10 The first photo I have is the current vista 11 down Pacific Avenue at the moment. The Draft EIR 12 states that there are no public scenic vistas available 13 from the project vicinity. This is not an accurate 14 statement, nor are the exhibits exhibited in the DEIR, 15 nor are they representative of the views down Pacific 16 Avenue. 17 The exhibits in the DEIR are taken from a 18 vantage point that are so close to the project that 19 only the project itself and the nearby buildings are 20 included in the frame. You can refer to page 43 of the 21 Draft EIR or the photo that Mr. Faust had put up 22 previously. 23 So this photo that I have placed now are 24 the -- is the current vista down Pacific Avenue, and I 25 have got another photo that we have prepared with</p>	20
18	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p> <p>1 \$75,000 a year, arguably the numbers are worse now that 2 we are in the recession. A quote from SF Gate says a 3 San Francisco household requires an annual income of 4 \$196,000 to afford a median-priced home in the City. 5 Other reports state that the primary reason for 6 families leaving San Francisco is because of housing 7 cost. 8 Yet, this development fails to do two things. 9 One, it fails to offer any BMR on site. I realize this 10 is an option for the developer, however, I think it is 11 a failure of this development. The DEIR states on 12 page 50 that there is shortage of affordable housing in 13 the City; however, this deficit is an existing 14 condition. Even though the DEIR cites these problems, 15 this development does nothing to solve the problem. 16 Number 2, as already stated by Michael 17 Schoolnik, that this development has an over abundance 18 of studio apartments. 54 percent of the units 19 are studios. 70 percent are studio and one-bedroom 20 apartments. This does nothing to save our families and 21 keep them in the City to retain our families in the 22 City. 23 Additionally, I think the housing that this 24 development offers caters more to timeshares and 25 corporate housing that is becoming a lot more prevalent</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 21</p> <p>1 buildings. It is showing the blockage now of that 2 vista that is currently there. The San Francisco 3 general plan states in Objective 1, emphasis of the 4 characteristic pattern which gives the City and its 5 neighborhoods an image, a sense of purpose, and a means 6 of orientation. San Francisco has an image and 7 character in its City pattern which depends especially 8 upon views, topography, streets, building forms, and 9 major landscaping. This pattern gives an organization 10 and sense of purpose to the City, denotes the extent 11 and special nature of districts and identifies the main 12 prominence of centers of human activity. 13 The pattern also assists in orientation for 14 travel on foot, by automobile, and public 15 transportation. The City pattern should be recognized, 16 protected, and enhanced. 17 The general plan further states building 18 height can define districts and centers of activity. 19 These advantages can be achieved without blocking or 20 reduction of views from private properties, public 21 areas, or major roadways if a proper plan for building 22 height is followed. 23 Pacific avenue was originally developed as the 24 gateway to Pacific Heights up at the current view back 25 up. Again, that vista shows the gateway. It was</p>	17



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Page 22

1 designed as an avenue rather than a street.  
 2 (Buzzer Rings.)  
 3 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you.  
 4 Diane Carol, Robin Hunter.  
 5 MS. CAROL: Good afternoon, Commissioners. I  
 6 am Diane Carol. I live at 1650 Jackson. I'm going to  
 7 speak about shadow impact from the DEIR.  
 8 Prop K protects certain public open spaces  
 9 from shadows due to new development. In our area, we  
 10 have only one park. Instead our residence use the  
 11 streets as our civil public spaces. The DEIR  
 12 misrepresents the impact of this project on a  
 13 neighborhood as it relates to shadows.  
 14 The current proposal involves a large  
 15 six-story building erected on the south side of a  
 16 relatively small street, Pacific Avenue. This  
 17 development will loom over the northern side of the  
 18 street which is composed of a full block of two-story  
 19 commercial buildings including a steakhouse, a gym, and  
 20 redeveloped historical firehouse, a hotel, small  
 21 businesses, and finally the cheese store.  
 22 The project sponsor has provided results of a  
 23 shadow impact at four specific points through a  
 24 calendar year. With the exception of December, all the  
 25 impact study reflects is that there will conveniently

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Page 23

1 be no shadow that goes beyond the parked cars across  
 2 the street.  
 3 We feel this study inadequately addresses  
 4 reality. The proposed structure is certain to block  
 5 far more sunlight than stated, particularly during the  
 6 winter months.  
 7 Despite the proposed building being nearly  
 8 three times the size of the current structure, it is  
 9 inconceivable that there are not more severe shadow  
 10 effects. If built, 1645 will be the largest  
 11 development in height and block size on the block, and  
 12 I believe the shadow study included in the DEIR greatly  
 13 diminishes the actual effect that the shadow of this  
 14 building will create.  
 15 When you take into account the (inaudible) and  
 16 mechanical penthouses the proposed project could have  
 17 impact -- visual, shadow, view objections, wind  
 18 equivalent to a seven-story building.  
 19 We all intuitively know the benefits that open  
 20 space and light has on the pedestrian experience and  
 21 commercial vitality. While the proposed development  
 22 includes its own commercial space, there's a vibrant  
 23 and active commercial stretch across the street that  
 24 should be taken into account. The size of the proposed  
 25 structure speaks for itself. There will be

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1 considerable impact on neighboring dwelling units, open  
 2 space, yards, surrounding areas, and the general  
 3 climate around the project.  
 4 This is especially important for the future  
 5 use of the old firehouse directly across the street  
 6 recently approved by the planning commission. This  
 7 structure will have outside seating and would be  
 8 particularly sun sensitive.  
 9 The DEIR also firmly states that 1646 Polk  
 10 Street is a six-story building. It is not. This  
 11 project was approved as a five-story building with  
 12 significant 12-foot setbacks on the fifth floor.  
 13 Additionally, it cites 1650 Broadway as a comparable  
 14 development, but that is outside of the Polk Street  
 15 NCD and its own distinguished neighborhood.  
 16 In closing, we believe the shadow study  
 17 reflected in the DEIR is not accurate and is  
 18 inadequate. Thank you.  
 19 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you.  
 20 MS. HUNTER: Good afternoon, President Miguel  
 21 and members of the Planning Commission. My name is  
 22 Robin Hunter, and I am the co-chair for the Pacific  
 23 Avenue Neighborhood Association commonly known as MPNA.  
 24 I'm before you today to share with you that  
 25 from our perspective the DEIR fails to acknowledge the

Page 25

1 importance of our City's forefathers in their planning  
 2 for our great City's skyline in the neighborhood design  
 3 that allows for light and air. Yes, we do continue to  
 4 come before the Planning Commission to raise these  
 5 issues. We do so because it is important.  
 6 Light, air, and skylines are important to our  
 7 neighborhoods and the City at large. MPNA and other  
 8 neighborhood groups worked for years to ensure these  
 9 qualities would be preserved. That effort most  
 10 recently resulted in the rezoning of Pacific Avenue.  
 11 As we contemplate future developments, we must  
 12 keep in mind and we urge the Planning Commission not  
 13 only the beautiful and interesting skylines, but also  
 14 the darkness that is created by massive block-building  
 15 design. Once built the light is gone forever.  
 16 I witness on the streets everyday people  
 17 crossing the streets and walking down the block in my  
 18 own neighborhood to seek out sunlight as a way for the  
 19 buses. They're of all ages, particularly some of our  
 20 more elderly.  
 21 In addition, though they may not have foreseen  
 22 the economic and development conditions we are now  
 23 experiencing, City planners historically and presently  
 24 did and do think about this one thing that  
 25 San Francisco -- that adds charm to San Francisco and

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<p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p> <p>1 that is that staggered rooftops. It provides light and  2 air and character to our neighborhoods. Developers are  3 attempting to piggyback on Van Ness zoning, which is  4 inappropriate for this neighborhood.  5 We sincerely welcome new development. We ask  6 that developers consider the quality and nature of the  7 existing neighborhood in designing and building new  8 developments. The cumulative effect of building the  9 size proposed by 1645 Pacific Developers is a dark,  10 windy and cold neighborhood in the City.  11 In addition, I would like to point out in  12 Section 5B under the Cumulative Aesthetic Impact  13 heading on page 46 the document notes that the proposed  14 project would not result in a cumulative significant  15 impact on the visual character of the project area when  16 considered together with the recently approved F1946  17 Street and 1615 Broadway discussed previously in the  18 land-use section on page 37. I am concerned about how  19 the document defines the term "project area" because it  20 allows for the references of projects that are several  21 blocks away. We ask the Commission to extend the time.  22 Please extend the time for comment for this particular  23 project. Thank you.  24 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Thank you.  25 Is there additional public comment on this</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p> <p>1 It seems the timing as was pointed out is a little  2 weird in this case.  3 COMMISSIONER MOORE: I would second that.  4 COMMISSIONER SUGAYA: With that said, I have  5 one particular comment on the Cultural Resource section  6 on page 56. It says that -- basically, it is saying  7 that the building is not a contributor to, quote, to an  8 auto-themed historic district because it predates the  9 introduction of the automobile to San Francisco.  10 That statement may be fine, but then it goes  11 on and says in essence the building was then altered to  12 accommodate auto-related uses. That seems to me to say  13 that at some point in time that the building was  14 changed and could legitimately be thought of as part of  15 the Van Ness auto row district. But then it continues  16 and says and is not intimately connected with the  17 theme.  18 So I would like to know in a response how that  19 all hangs together so to speak. The first part is  20 fine, but if you change the building to essentially  21 become an auto-related use, then why is it not related  22 to the theme of auto-related uses?  23 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Commissioner Antonini.  24 COMMISSIONER ANTONINI: I would generally  25 appreciate the comments from the public. They did</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p> <p>1 item?  2 If not, public comment is closed.  3 I would like to compliment certainly MPNA, but  4 particularly the Middle Polk Neighborhood Association,  5 one of the relatively newer neighborhood associations  6 in San Francisco. Your presentation, even though I  7 know you mentioned you were under time constraints, was  8 to a draft EIR is exactly what it should have been.  9 You were specific. You took the points. You made your  10 page references. There was no unnecessary comment  11 regarding it.  12 There are many, many, much, much older  13 neighborhood associations that come before this  14 Commission and other commissions who do not do nearly  15 as well in laying out the exact comments they wish to  16 have included. So I have to compliment you on that.  17 Commissioner Sugaya.  18 COMMISSIONER SUGAYA: Yes, I appreciated the  19 presentations in such an organized manner, but we all  20 know you can submit written comments in addition to  21 what you presented here. Those may be a lot more  22 extensive than what we heard given the time limit that  23 you are under here at the Commission hearing.  24 With that said, I would be in favor of the  25 Commission considering an extension beyond January 2nd.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p> <p>1 raise some good points; however, I would not support an  2 extension of the comment period because I think that  3 many points were already made and I think this is  4 fairly common. I calculated it at 45 days. I believe  5 that's what is normally the case.  6 I will just go through some of the comments  7 even though they are valid ones. I did note that  8 there's an extensive historical analysis in the DEIR,  9 and it does talk about the lack of integrity in some of  10 the buildings. As far as the heights in the area, they  11 do mention the heights of the various buildings in the  12 area.  13 Now, you may not agree with the height and  14 bulk, but that's not before us today. The question is  15 is the DEIR complete in their analysis of the heights,  16 and I think they did that.  17 Someone talked about the analysis of the  18 projected trips of people would make by auto one would  19 assume and Table 6 on page 77 evaluates the per person  20 trips per day at various hours. I thought that was  21 pretty well answered.  22 Again, what is not before us, but it will be  23 during the CU hearing is certainly an analysis of  24 whether the height is appropriate, the bulk is  25 appropriate, whether the views are blocked. I think</p>

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32	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 30</p> <p>1 the shadows on streets are somewhat different than  2 shadows on parks, but it might certainly be an issue  3 that we have to consider in our consideration for the  4 CU.  5 So while I appreciate the comments, I think  6 there is a lot to talk about on this project before  7 approval. I think that we feel the DEIR period is long  8 enough on this. Even though it comes over the  9 holidays, I think you have done an extremely good job  10 of analyzing the various parts in there.  11 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Commissioner Moore.  12 COMMISSIONER MOORE: I would like to suggest  13 the extension of the comment period for us as  14 commissioners. It is unusual to have a draft EIR like  15 that within one week of the hearing. This particular  16 draft EIR came into our packet last week.  17 So based on that, we have something which is  18 normally done differently. We have at least two to  19 three to four weeks ahead of time. The good thing was  20 this -- this was in my packet last week.  21 Putting that aside, I think the comments made  22 by MPNA as well as by the Mid Polk neighborhood in  23 support of President Miguel were excellent and  24 summarized not only individual issues, but basically  25 laid out a complete story which shows to -- points out</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 32</p> <p>1 received this about a week ago, is that correct?  2 COMMISSIONER MOORE: That's correct. It was  3 put into our packet last Thursday night.  4 COMMISSIONER ANTONINI: Generally, you would  5 like to see an EIR two weeks ahead minimum.  6 COMMISSIONER MOORE: Every EIR I have been  7 given has been given to me weeks and weeks ahead of  8 time, small or large.  9 COMMISSIONER ANTONINI: This question comes up  10 frequently.  11 MR. RAHAM: I believe, and correct me if I am  12 wrong, but I think it is one week before, but I believe  13 bigger and more in-depth EIRs are two weeks.  14 COMMISSIONER MOORE: I have the Fairmont EIR  15 already. It is a third of the size of this one. I  16 have had it laying around for weeks. I just personally  17 believe that one week for a document of this size is  18 just not enough, particularly when we are dealing with  19 two phonebook-high EIRs the same day.  20 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Commissioners,  21 (inaudible), Planning Department Staff, I thought that  22 the Commissioners received the draft EIR when it was  23 published.  24 COMMISSIONER MOORE: No.  25 MR. RAHAM: We hardly ever get it when they</p>
27	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 31</p> <p>1 to me certain aspects which not have been used as a  2 basic attitude of how to present a draft EIR. I would  3 like to raise another issue, and that has something to  4 do with what I believe is the ultimate impact of CPMC  5 and of the changes which are coming up eight blocks  6 down the road in a corridor which also will be served  7 by Pacific Avenue and the new bus impacts on Pacific.  8 I have to believe that traffic coming from  9 downtown will use Pacific Avenue as one way to go to  10 CPMC that will be inevitable, and I think that has not  11 been addressed at all. People continue to ignore it.  12 I asked about that in the Sutter Street Project, our  13 Trader Joe's housing project. I have asked it over and  14 over again. I am raising this issue today for this EIR  15 as well.  16 Overall, I think the EIR touches on many  17 important issues; however, I would like to see it  18 supplemented by what we heard including my concerns  19 about CPMC.  20 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Commissioner Antonini.  21 COMMISSIONER ANTONINI: I guess, of course, we  22 will get comments and responses to this, which will be  23 an ability to hear it again.  24 I guess, Commissioner Moore, I just want to  25 understand. Let's see if I can check with staff. We</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 33</p> <p>1 are published.  2 COMMISSIONER MOORE: I got this last week.  3 COMMISSIONER ANTONINI: I can't remember when  4 exactly when I --  5 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Which would put it way back  6 in November because this was published back on  7 November 18.  8 COMMISSIONER MOORE: Director Raham, when we  9 walked down the street the other day, I was unaware  10 that this was in my packet.  11 MR. RAHAM: We will clarify this because the  12 Commission has to have a hearing within the comment  13 period. So our practice has been to get it to you when  14 it is published or shortly thereafter. If that was not  15 the case here, I apologize. I don't know what  16 happened. We have to have the hearing within a certain  17 time frame from the release. We can't have it too far  18 in advance. We have to figure all of that out.  19 COMMISSIONER MOORE: I love to work hard, but  20 all I'm basically saying is let's give it another week  21 or two or whatever based on the holidays and then I  22 think everybody will be happy.  23 COMMISSIONER ANTONINI: I would be supportive  24 of that in this instance. I can't remember  25 specifically when this one came. I do remember, for</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 34</p> <p>1 example, next week we have the large Hunters Point                  2 Candlestick. We got that a day after its release                  3 period, which was November 13. So by contrast, I can't                  4 say for sure when we received this one. Let's see what                  5 the other commissioners want.                  6 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Commissioner Sugaya.                  7 COMMISSIONER SUGAYA: Given the discussion, I                  8 would like to move to lead the comment period out two                  9 weeks.                  10 UNIDENTIFIED COMMISSIONER: I second that.                  11 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Commissioner Lee.                  12 COMMISSIONER LEE: I also was going to move to                  13 continue for two weeks because of the fairness issue.                  14 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Commissioner Gordon.                  15 COMMISSIONER GORDON: I think this is ironic                  16 in light of our earlier discussion about January 7th                  17 and the difference of holidays and people getting                  18 materials and feeling like they can respond to them                  19 adequately, So I just want to put that out there.                  20 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Commissioner Antonini.                  21 COMMISSIONER ANTONINI: I'm just going to be                  22 supportive of this, but I just want to be clear that                  23 the reason is not the time of the year, but the fact                  24 that there is some question as to when we received it.                  25 And if we had received a new DEIR in a timely manner</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 35</p> <p>1 then I think I wouldn't be in favor of extending it.                  2 It's our job to get it read.                  3 In this case, it seems to have been not as                  4 timely as many of the others we have received perhaps,                  5 then I am okay with the extension.                  6 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Commissioners, if I can                  7 just make one point or two points actually on your                  8 receipt of the document.                  9 MEA staff seems to believe you get the                  10 documents immediately upon publication. Those                  11 documents if they are sent from the consultant, you                  12 probably would. But if they come to the department,                  13 you don't. They would go to the staff of the                  14 department. Staff will prepare their memo, their cover                  15 memo or whatever and then they put it in your -- they                  16 put it out for my staff to put it in your packet. So                  17 you would not receive it immediately.                  18 I have a feeling that is what happened with                  19 this case. It did not come to you immediately from the                  20 consultant. It went to staff first.                  21 The second thing the -- it says here in the                  22 note that written comments will be accepted at the                  23 Planning Department's offices until 5:00 p.m. on                  24 January 2nd, 2010. Well, January 2nd, 2010 is a                  25 Saturday. I don't believe the department offices are</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 36</p> <p>1 open that day. If you are going to continue this for                  2 two weeks, I would say you're continuing it to Monday,                  3 January 18th, at 5:00 p.m., for accepting of written                  4 comments. That concludes my comments.                  5 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Is that acceptable?                  6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Whatever date works                  7 unless it is another holiday.                  8 MR. BADNER: Actually, it is. It's Martin                  9 Luther King.                  10 COMMISSION SECRETARY: So it would be Tuesday,                  11 the 19th.                  12 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Commissioner Antonini.                  13 COMMISSIONER ANTONINI: I was going to suggest                  14 the Friday prior, but it looks like -- so Tuesday,                  15 January 19th. Is that what we are looking at?                  16 COMMISSION SECRETARY: So Commissioners, that                  17 then is a motion on this item that has been put forth                  18 by Commissioner Sugaya. Is there a second?                  19 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Yes, several.                  20 COMMISSION SECRETARY: I just need one. On                  21 the motion to continue the acceptance of written                  22 comments to close of business or 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday,                  23 January 19th -- Commissioner Antonini?                  24 COMMISSIONER ANTONINI: Aye.                  25 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Commissioner Borden?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 37</p> <p>1 COMMISSIONER BORDEN: Aye.                  2 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Commissioner Lee?                  3 COMMISSIONER LEE: Aye.                  4 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Commissioner Moore?                  5 COMMISSIONER MOORE: Aye.                  6 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Commissioner Sugaya?                  7 COMMISSIONER SUGAYA: Aye.                  8 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Commissioner Olague?                  9 COMMISSIONER OLAGUE: Aye.                  10 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Commissioner Miguel?                  11 PRESIDENT MIGUEL: Aye.                  12 COMMISSION SECRETARY: Thank you,                  13 Commissioners.                  14 The written comment period has been extended                  15 to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 19th, 2010.                  16 With that, the public hearing is closed.                  17 (Whereupon, the proceedings were adjourned.)                  18                  19 --oOo--                  20                  21                  22                  23                  24                  25</p>
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Appendix 3:  
JANUARY 2007 MCGREW  
HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

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**Figure 1** Front Facade of 1645 Pacific Avenue

**Historic Resource Evaluation Report:**

**1645 Pacific Avenue  
San Francisco, California**

**Prepared for:  
Nick Podel Company  
1201 Howard Avenue, Suite 201  
Burlingame, California 94010**

**Prepared By:  
Patrick McGrew  
McGREW / ARCHITECTURE  
764 South Grenfall Road  
Palm Springs, California 92264  
760.416.7819**

**Administrative Draft:  
January 2007**

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Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1645 Pacific Avenue

### **Summary – Overview of report and conclusions**

At the request of the Nick Podell Company, McGrew / Architecture has prepared an Historic Resource Evaluation Report (HRER) of the building located at 1645 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco. Originally built as the San Francisco Riding Academy, the building is being evaluated as to its potential as an historical resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The building is a pre-quake structure that has been altered beyond recognition. The earliest record is a listing in the 1895 City Directory, corroborated by the 1899 Sanborn-Parris Map of the building at this address. To prepare this HRER, McGrew / Architecture utilized the *City and County of San Francisco's CEQA Review Procedures for Historic Resources (Final Draft October 2004)* outlined as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Building Background data
3. Past Historic Evaluations
4. New Evaluation of the Existing Structure as a Potential Historic Resource
5. Context and Relationship
6. Project-Specific Impacts
7. Cumulative Impacts
8. Mitigation

The project as proposed includes the demolition of the structure, to be replaced by....(Podell to supply project description)

The facts uncovered in the research indicate that the building does not appear to be eligible for either the National or California Registries under any of the four criteria, as well as through a loss of integrity. The existing building has not been evaluated by any of the rating systems that apply to the area, and the building is not mentioned in the Van Ness Plan, an element of the Planning Department's General Plan. The building is not a contributor to any existing or potential local, California or National Register Historic Districts. Since the findings do not indicate the presence of an historic resource, compliance with the Secretary's Standards and mitigations are not required.

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1645 Pacific Avenue

**1. Introduction** - Basic brief description of what is being proposed with the project.

Project Description: To supplied by Nick Podell Company

## **2. Building Background Data**

**Historic Name:** San Francisco Riding Academy a.k.a. San Francisco Riding Club

**Common Name:** None

**Address:** 1645 Pacific Avenue

**Block and Lot No.** 695 / 13

**Date of Construction:** c. 1895 (City Directory / Sanborn Map)

1906 Repairs by J. F. Dunn

1922 Alteration by August Headman

1963 Facade alterations; no architect listed

**Architectural Style:** Indeterminate (Front facade was stripped and stuccoed in 1963)

**Architect:** Unknown; 1906 repairs by James Francis Dunn

**Building Type / Original and subsequent Uses:** Riding Academy / Garage

**Original Owner:** Robert R. Hind (1894 & 1901 Handy Block Books; 1906 Permit: Hind Estate Company

**Subsequent Owners / Tenants:** Rudolph Spreckels<sup>1</sup>; A. A. Tisconia; Vann's Body Shop; Reynold C. Johnson; PT&T; Callan Stroud & Dale; Lee Mah.

**Period of Significance**<sup>2</sup>: 1963

**Architecture** (*Building Description including exterior materials and features, interior, setting.*)

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<sup>1</sup> Spreckels also owned the adjacent parcel to the east for a time. He was one of San Francisco's wealthiest man who expanded his fortune through real estate speculation; There is no indication in the records of any association with Spreckels and the property (other than a brief ownership) that would qualify as a primary association with the building.

<sup>2</sup> If an older building has been remodeled to the extent that its appearance dates from the time of the remodeling, it can only be eligible if the period of significance corresponds with the period of the alterations.

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The subject building was purpose-built as The San Francisco Riding Academy. The date of the original construction of the building is circa 1895, based upon information found in the 1895 Sanborn-Perris Map Company maps, the Handy Block Books and the corresponding City Directories. Following the earthquake, the Riding Academy relocated to Seventh Avenue and the building was put into a new use. A 1906 building permit that cites the building's post-quake repairs by architect James Francis Dunn indicates a use as a carriage shop, although no listing for a carriage shop at this address has been found in the City Directories. Later alterations in 1922 and especially 1969 have resulted in the building's current appearance. It is located near the southeast corner of Pacific Avenue and Van Ness, and together with the adjacent 1661 Pacific Avenue (which was a later addition) contains 27,275 gross square feet that occupies a rectangular footprint 125' wide by 127' - 8" deep. The building is two stories tall and is approximately 26' feet in height. The south, east and west exterior walls of the structure appear to be unreinforced masonry with no architectural embellishments. The west wall has a few window openings into the added-on structure at 1661 Pacific. The building's principal facade faces onto Pacific Avenue and is detailed with cement plaster with industrial sash windows, all of which appear to date from the 1969 remodel.

Character-Defining Features

The building appears to have been stripped of any significant character-defining features; the following list comprises the surviving character-defining features of the building that have survived, but are of no particular significance.

General

Rectangular footprint and massing  
Masonry exterior walls  
Flat roof

**History:**

The building was a speculative venture built by Robert R. Hind circa 1895. Its original use was as the San Francisco Riding Academy. By 1917 it was being used as an "electric garage" and has subsequently housed several auto-oriented tenants. Under the current proposal, the building will be demolished. Although the original architect of the building is unknown, the post-quake repairs of 1645 Pacific were done by James Francis Dunn, although the building is not representative of the particular phases, aspects or themes for which Dunn is known.

**3. Past Historic Evaluations**

The property is not now, nor has it been previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or the California Register of Historic Resources (California Register). It is not included in the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS). There are a number of surveys and lists of San Francisco structures that are considered to have attained a degree of architectural, historical, and/or contextual importance. An examination of these lists or surveys indicates that the building is not listed in San Francisco's 1976 *Architectural Survey* and was not included in the 1968 Junior League Survey (the basis of the book *Here Today*). Additionally, it was not rated in any SF Heritage Surveys and not included in the Planning Department's General Plan Element entitled the Van Ness Plan.

**4. Evaluation of the Existing Potential Resource (using National and California Register Criteria)**

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### **Historic Preservation Regulations and Criteria (*Historical Resource as Defined under CEQA*)**

Historic architectural surveys provide information about existing properties that may be of value to a community. Designation or listing on a registry of cultural and/or historical resources may occur if a building is found to be of value; designation or listing can also serve to alert potential land developers of the public's interest in such properties as changes to listed properties generally require review by public boards and/or commissions. .

**The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)** was originally enacted in 1970 in order to inform, identify, and disclose to decision-makers and the general public the effects a project may have on the environment. Historical resources are included in the comprehensive definition of the environment under CEQA. Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a) an historical resource is defined as.

Any resource listed in or determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources by the State Historical Resources Commission; or

Any resource included in a local register of historical resources pursuant to §5020.1 (k) of the California Public Resources Code; or

Any resource identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the criteria set forth in §5024.1 (g) of the California Public Resource Code; or

Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California.

**National Register:** (The *National Register of Historic Places* (NRHP) evaluates a property's historic significance based on the following four criteria:)

Criterion A (Event): Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Criterion B (Person): Properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Criterion C (Design/Construction): Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Criterion D (Information Potential): Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Should a property be determined to be of historic significance, an NRHP evaluation requires a determination of physical integrity, or the authenticity of an historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. Integrity consists of seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Since integrity is based on a property's significance within a specific historic context, an evaluation of a property's integrity can only occur after historic significance has been established.

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**California Register:** [California Office of Historic Preservation's Technical Assistance Series #6, *California Register and National Register: A Comparison*, outlines the differences between the federal and state processes. The *California Register of Historical Resources* (CRHR) evaluates a resource's historic significance based on the following four criteria:]

Criterion 1 (Event): Resources associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Criterion 2 (Person): Resources associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.

Criterion 3 (Design/Construction): Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values.

Criterion 4 (Information Potential): Resources that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Like the NRHP, a CRHR evaluation requires a determination of physical integrity, but only after historic significance has been established. California's integrity threshold is slightly lower than federal requirements, resulting in some historically significant resources that do not meet NRHP integrity standards, but are eligible for CRHR listing. Any resource listed in or determined eligible for listing in the NRHP is automatically eligible for listing in the CRHR.

To be potentially eligible for *individual* listing on the NRHP and/or CRHR, a structure must usually be over 50 years old, must have historic significance, and must retain its physical integrity. The building at 1645 Pacific Avenue is over 50 years old, having been originally built in 1895. The building meets the age but none of the historic criteria as indicated in the following analysis and further, does not meet the integrity requirements.

**Criterion A/1:** Archival research yielded no information indicating sufficient association with historic events and developments significant to national or state history. Although the property is one of many that were built on or near San Francisco's Van Ness corridor before the events of April 1906, such association is not sufficiently significant to be considered Register-eligible as either an event or a pattern of events in the city or county's early development. The subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

**Criterion B/2:** Research yielded no evidence indicating a primary association with significant historic individuals or entities. Though the building is associated with the real estate investor Robert R. Hind, and later his estate (administered by his son George U. Hind), and briefly with sugar-magnate Rudolph Spreckels who also owned the adjacent property, the building was essentially a speculative venture for both, and has no important association with either's accomplishments. For the purposes of CEQA, the building does not have meaningful or significant ties to any person of significance in local, state or national history. Therefore, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

**Criterion C/3:** 1645 Pacific Avenue is a less than intact example of a 1895 Riding Academy that was later remodeled for commercial uses including some automobile-related uses. It does not sufficiently

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embody distinctive characteristics of a style, type, or period nor does it possess high artistic value, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction to be individually eligible. Similarly, although the building may have at one time been an example of the work of early San Francisco architect James Francis Dunn, subsequent alterations have removed any details that may have been characteristic of his work. Consequently, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

**Criterion D/4:** The property at 1645 Pacific Avenue has not yielded, nor is it likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history. While this criterion is generally applied to archeological resources, it applies to any building, structure, or object whose physical fabric itself can be considered an artifact. The 1645 Pacific Avenue property contains no visually-observable, above-ground elements whose physical fabric includes unique materials, provides information on special building techniques, or has the potential to provide information about our past. Therefore, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

**Integrity** – Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must not only be shown to be significant under National and/or California Register criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. Historic properties either retain integrity (that is, convey their significance) or they do not. Within the concept of integrity, the National Register criteria recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. Determining *which* of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when of the property is significant. If the building had been substantially altered, a discussion of the seven aspects of integrity (location, design, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship, association) would be undertaken to determine if the building retains its integrity. Based upon existing photographs and building permits<sup>3</sup>, it appears that the building's integrity has been lost, and further analysis is unnecessary.

## 5. Context and Relationship

Historic context as related in the Van Ness Plan: "In 1849, William Eddy extended the 50 Vara<sup>4</sup> land division of the downtown to Larkin Street, replicating street and block dimensions created by earlier surveys of Jean Vioget and Jasper O'Farrell. The Western Addition, as the sand dunes and chaparral west of Larkin were called, subsequently surveyed by several private groups before the city-sponsored Van Ness Survey was completed in the mid-1850's. Originally known as Marlette Street, the centerpiece of this extended 50 Vara survey was re-named in honor of Mayor James Van Ness. Situated in the valley between Nob and Russian Hills

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<sup>3</sup>A request for copies of building permits from the City's Microfilm department has resulted in 21 building permits for the buildings located at 1645-61 Pacific Avenue. These permit applications detail changes that have occurred to the building over time that have resulted in the building's 1969 facade. The loss of integrity resulting from these changes is sufficient to preclude Register-eligibility, if the building were to qualify under any of the four criteria.

<sup>4</sup>A cellular unit, known as Vara, provided a set of dimensions which allowed for grid expansion throughout the South of Market and northern part of San Francisco. In the latter area, the 50 Vara survey consisted of blocks measuring 412'6" by 275', or six 50 Vara squares whose sides measured 137'6". Street widths were commonly 25 Vara, or 68'9", although this varied considerably.

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and Pacific Heights, Van Ness Avenue was intended to function as the city's central north-south spine. Consequently, the survey shaved off parts of the blocks on both sides of Van Ness to create a 125' wide avenue.<sup>5</sup>

"Despite grand hopes for the new Boulevard, development of properties along the avenue was slow and the U.S. Coast Survey of 1869 indicated only scattered structures. In the 1860's Van Ness began at Market Street and terminated at the U.S. military reserve at Black Point. Since principal growth corridors radiated out from the downtown, it was a long time before cross-town streets such as Van Ness could become important arteries. The 1884 Coast and Geodetic Survey shows buildings concentrated along intersecting streets with cable car lines such as Fulton, McAllister, Ellis and Geary. Throughout this period, Polk Street, rather than Van Ness, functioned as the principal commercial street of the mid-city, serving people living on Nob and Russian Hills. It is conceivable that the width of Van Ness — like that of Market Street — discouraged its use as a neighborhood shopping street.

"Thus, as opposed to the heterogeneous development of the avenue in the twentieth century, the nineteenth century land pattern primarily consisted of wooden dwelling units. While lower Van Ness Avenue was soon occupied by dense working class housing, the middle and upper reaches of the avenue became characterized by residences of the wealthy. Italianate homes were constructed during the 1870's and 1880's, and were followed by large Queen Anne [style] residences in the 1890's. Prominent families who owned homes on Van Ness included the Spreckels, Crocker and Gianninis. Aside from residences, the only large buildings shown on the 1899-1905 Sanborn Maps were the Mechanics Library, Concordia Club, St. Lukes Episcopal Church, First Presbyterian Church and St. Dunston's Hotel. Livery stables, small industries, a school and other miscellaneous uses were located on side streets.

"Industrialization of Rincon Hill — caused by the Second Street Cut of 1869 — and shortage of available land on Nob Hill encouraged the development of a new high-income neighborhood, and Van Ness Avenue became a logical choice largely stimulated by proximity to downtown, availability of undeveloped parcels, and access to cable car lines. Furthermore, in the mid-1870's a row of Eucalyptus trees was planted along each side of the avenue, contributing to its park-like ambience.

Van Ness Avenue's basic land use pattern continued until 1906. The earthquake and fire of that year destroyed most of San Francisco and would likely have gone on to burn Pacific Heights had it not been for the great width of Van Ness Avenue, a natural fire break. During the first day of the fire soldiers had attempted fire breaks further east of Van Ness Avenue, all of which proved unsuccessful. They tried again at Van Ness on the second day, dynamiting every building on its east side south of Filbert Street, containing most of the fire and saving the Western Addition: the area between Sutter and Washington Streets was not contained until Franklin Street, and the area south of Golden Gate Avenue was not contained until Octavia Street.

"Immediately after the fire, burned out businesses from the downtown moved to either Van Ness Avenue or Fillmore Street. Surviving mansions on the west side of Van Ness were converted into stores, and temporary commercial buildings were quickly constructed on the east side of the street. The city's major department stores — City of Paris, the White House, and the Emporium — all located here, as did the Bank of California and the Anglo California Bank.

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<sup>5</sup>The creation of a 125' wide boulevard out of a 68'9" street necessitated shaving off parts of the blocks on either side of Van Ness. Thus, 28'9" was taken from the block extending to Polk Street and 27'9" was garnered from the western block extending to Franklin Street. The choice of 125 feet for Van Ness may have been influenced by the widths of major streets in eastern cities, such as Broadway in New York and Market Street in Philadelphia

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“By 1909, however, the reconstruction of the downtown district led to the return to downtown of businesses that were temporarily located on Van Ness Avenue, the second transformation of the avenue’s land use pattern in less than three years. Far from returning to its earlier history as a residential boulevard, new development along the lower and middle sections of Van Ness consisted of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses. The 1911 Sanborn Map illustrates the heterogeneous uses — including auto body, wagon and bicycle repair shops — as well as numerous undeveloped sites. A National Guard Armory was located at the southeast corner of California Street while clubs and hotels were scattered along the mid section of the avenue. In contrast to these areas, the upper section of Van Ness, north of Jackson Street, retained its residential character.

“In addition to several surviving nineteenth century mansions, private homes and large apartment buildings in a wide variety of architectural styles were constructed following the 1906 disaster. After 1915 and the Panama Pacific Exposition, residences were constructed along Van Ness north of Francisco Street. By the 1920’s — aside from several large apartment buildings — automobile-oriented businesses emerged as the most common use between Civic Center and Jackson Street. Earlier, between 1904 and 1908 many small auto showrooms and garages were built along Golden Gate Avenue between Hyde and Van Ness, and after 1910 several small showrooms and repair garages located on Van Ness itself. The growing automobile industry soon demanded more grandiose buildings, and by 1911 prominent architects such as McDonald and Applegarth, Willis Polk and Bernard Maybeck began designing automobile showrooms here.

“After the Second World War, the designation of Van Ness as U.S. Highway 101 led to the use of the avenue as a primary vehicular thoroughfare and the concurrent re-orientation of businesses towards citywide and regional markets.”<sup>6</sup> Since the late 1970’s, automobile-oriented businesses have declined as some auto showrooms relocated to other areas within the city....” As a response to this decline, much of the avenue was re-zoned to encourage high-density residential development, and many new examples of this building type were built along the avenue in the intervening years, resulting in a significant change in the area’s historic context as “automobile row.” Many movie theaters and restaurants opened up alongside the automobile showrooms; some of the former showrooms were even converted to restaurants, theaters and offices, and some were demolished to provide sites for the new residential developments. The subject building has not been cited as making a contribution to the character of the Van Ness Corridor context.

**6. Project-Specific Impacts**(Compliance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation)

A project that involves an historic resource will qualify for a categorical exemption from environmental review if the proposed change or alteration is minor and if the implementation of the alteration will meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures. However, application of the Secretary’s Standards to this project is not required because the building is not an historic resource under CEQA due to its loss of Integrity.

**7. Cumulative Impacts**

This section of the report is to be utilized if the subject building is located within an established (or potential) historic district and if the subject building is proposed for demolition. The subject property is located within the boundaries of the Van Ness Plan. Although the Van Ness Plan provides lists of both Significant and Contributing structures, the numerous historic resources in the area must be considered more of a thematic

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<sup>6</sup> Van Ness Plan



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grouping than a traditional historic district. Since the Van Ness Plan was written, substantial change has come to the Avenue, at least partly in response to the zoning changes proposed by the Plan. The primary stated goal of the *Van Ness Avenue Area Plan* (Policy 1) is the creation of significantly higher residential densities in the Van Ness Avenue Corridor through new construction on vacant or underutilized lots. Some of the less significant automobile showrooms have been demolished and replaced with high-density residential structures. Some of the Significant and Contributing structures have been adapted to new uses with the result that the character and feel of Auto Row remaining largely intact. If the subject property were a contributor to a potential historic district, it would not have to be considered unique, rare, or even an increasingly at-risk type of structure, for its loss to lead to an adverse cumulative impact, if an historic district were indeed present.

According to the Planning Department, "Several historic studies (EIRs, a Section 106 Review and other Historic Resource Evaluations)<sup>7</sup> in the past few years have identified a *potential* automotive-themed historic district in the area along Van Ness Avenue from Civic Center to Jackson Street including parallel streets on the east and west [i.e. west side of Polk to east side of Franklin] and perpendicular streets. And, in reference to a near-by project, "The buildings on the proposed project [1461 and 1465 Pine Street ] site are also consistent with the strong automotive theme of the Van Ness Avenue corridor. As automobiles grew in popularity during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Van Ness Avenue between the Civic Center and Jackson Street emerged as the center for automobile sales, service, and repairs in San Francisco. As described in the Van Ness Avenue Area Plan of the *San Francisco General Plan*, significant showrooms were located on Van Ness Avenue itself, while smaller ancillary uses such as garages and smaller showrooms proliferated on surrounding side streets. The Section 106 Review report for the area, completed in May 2004 by Architectural Resource Group<sup>8</sup>, found the automobile-theme buildings in this area "contribute to the strong automotive theme of the neighborhood, relating garages, repair shops, car showrooms, and motels catering to visitors traveling by car." The document concludes that the automotive theme buildings in the area "appear to be eligible as contributing buildings to a National Register Historic District, which has not as yet been fully identified or researched."

The **National and California Registers define (traditional) Historic Districts** as possessing "a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development." Based upon this definition, because the Van Ness Corridor is not united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development; and because it is not a unified entity which can convey a visual sense of an overall historic environment; and because of numerous contemporary intrusions and because no records have been compiled regarding the integrity of these properties, and because the area is not geographically definable and distinguishable from surrounding properties, and because the area does not consist of a single geographic area of contiguous historic properties, the Van Ness Corridor fails to qualify as a traditional continuous or discontinuous National or California Register Historic District.

**Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code** does not specifically state that a local historic district must comply with the definition and requirements of a National Register Historic District. However, Section. 1004.1 of the Planning Code requires that "Initiation of designation shall be by the Board of Supervisors or by a resolution of intention by the Planning Commission, the Art Commission or the [Landmarks Preservation] Advisory Board, or on the verified application of owners of the property to be designated or their authorized agents." Initiation by the Planning staff is not included on the list of those who may initiate designation. The code

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<sup>7</sup> Memorandum: "Historic Resource Evaluation Response: 1634-1644, 1650-1656, 1660, 1670 and 1690 Pine Street by MEA Planner: Tammy Chan. Dated August 2, 2006.

<sup>8</sup>Two requests to Architectural Resources Group for a copy of the Section 106 Review (authored in the firm's Pasadena Office) have been made, but as yet there has been no response.

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section continues: "Where such an application is submitted for designation of a historic district, the application must be subscribed by, or on behalf of, at least 66 percent of the property owners in the proposed district." A Van Ness Corridor local historic district has not been included on the Landmarks Board's Work Program, and the requirement of support by 66 percent of the property owners in the proposed traditional historic district renders the possibility of designation unlikely.

The potential for qualifying the Van Ness Corridor as a National, California or San Francisco Register thematic historic district is examined as follows :

**Thematic Historic Districts** Defined:<sup>9</sup> In some instances, buildings that are not significant in themselves become important when viewed as part of a larger collection. Typically residential neighborhoods with high concentrations of similar homes having a common history are candidates for historic districts. Traditional (geographical) historical districts have been listed on the National Register, California Register, and the San Francisco Register contains 11 traditional historic districts. Generally, these traditional historic districts are based upon easily recognized geographical boundaries: e.g., all contiguous properties or structures on a particular block or in a recognizable neighborhood or district.

By contrast, "thematic historic districts" include buildings or structures that are related to each other through a common theme, but which are not necessarily all located within a contiguous area. Thematic districts recognize notable buildings or structures which, as a group, reflect significant influence upon the character or development of a neighborhood, city, state or the nation. These so-called thematic historic districts (so called because they are not districts *per se*, because they are non-contiguous and do not share a specific geography, but instead include a related group of resources) contain buildings that are related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way by a common theme related to their historic context, architectural style, development period, or other characteristics. Thematic historic districts have no boundaries, and all of the structures that share the similarity in a city, state or nation are considered contributors.

As is the case with traditional historic districts, thematic districts can be based on architecture or history. An architectural / historical theme has been suggested for San Francisco's collection of automobile showrooms and supporting buildings along the Van Ness Avenue corridor, although San Francisco has not established any regulation procedures or ever designated a local thematic district. For a building or structure to be nominated to a thematic historic district or grouping, it must fit the historic theme. For example, in the case of the Van Ness corridor automotive-themed potential historic district, the nominated building or structure must have been purpose-built as an automobile showroom or other automobile-themed use. Documentation to that effect is essential and could involve original deeds, building permits, newspaper articles, city directory listings, documented recollections of original owners or their family members, etc. Additionally, the building or structure would need to be at least 50 years old, and must retain a degree of integrity sufficient to convey its significance.

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<sup>9</sup> Rather than use the term "thematic historic district," the National Register utilizes the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) which is the core of a Multiple Property Submission. In 1986, this format replaced the previously used Thematic and Multiple Resource Area formats. Multiple Resource Area (MRA) refers to a format used to register groups of properties related by historic association or theme. This format was replaced by the National Park Service in 1986, and the current format is used to register groups of properties that are related by historic association or theme, but are not contiguous. The Multiple Property Documentation Form contains the historic context, and the background historic, geographical, and architectural information about the group of properties being nominated, and is accompanied by one or more Registration Forms that describe the specific properties. Together, the MPDF and its associated Registration Forms comprise a Multiple Property Submission. Examples of National Register thematic historic districts include Carnegie Libraries and federal Post Offices located throughout the country.

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The nomination and approval process for a property or structure to be designated as part of a thematic district would be essentially the same as that for a stand-alone landmark, a process that does not always result in the designation or listing of the resource. Each property or structure would have to be nominated with its own set of nomination documents, although the various review bodies involved might consider several sets of nominations as a thematic group at the same time. A thematic district process would require guidelines for inclusion as well as a certificate of appropriateness application for any exterior modifications to the property or structure should the nomination/designation be completed. Modifications to Article 10 in regard to the 66% owner consent may be required if the multiple properties are described as an historic district. Potential may exist for an automotive-themed historic district centered on the Van Ness Avenue corridor and beyond, but to date, the full extent of the thematic district remains undocumented and unresearched.

The building evaluated in this report was built in 1895 as the San Francisco Riding Academy which is not an auto-related use. Over the years it was converted to many different uses, some of which were auto-related, but the subsequent uses are incidental. The building cannot be considered a contributor to an auto-themed historic district, because, to qualify as a contributing structure to an automotive-themed historic district, a structure must demonstrate a pattern or primary importance intimately connected with the theme, such as the auto showrooms. Other buildings directly connected to the theme, but of secondary importance, such as garages, paint shops or repair shops that contained original exterior and interior features such as garage doors and/or auto ramps designed especially for the automotive work, would also be considered contributing structures. Buildings that are only incidental to the auto-themed historic district, or buildings altered to accommodate auto-related uses, or buildings that predate the introduction of the automobile to San Francisco would not qualify for the potential auto-related thematic district

## **8. Mitigation**

Mitigation is required to ameliorate any project-specific or cumulative impacts. Since the facts concerning the subject building do not support a finding that the building is an historic resource, there are no adverse impacts. Consequently, no mitigation is required.

## **9. Conclusions**

The proposed project requires the demolition of 1645 Pacific Avenue. The forgoing analysis indicates that the building is not a significant example of a post earthquake automobile-oriented structure, and is not unique, rare, or an increasingly at-risk type of structure. The facts contained in the research indicate that the building does not appear to be individually eligible for either the National or California Registries under any of the four criteria, and its integrity is sufficiently compromised to preclude Register-eligibility. The existing building is not rated by SF Heritage, and is not listed in the Van Ness Plan, an element of the Planning Department's General Plan. Although the Van Ness Plan contains lists of Significant and Contributing structures, the Plan does not constitute an historic district as defined by the California or National Registers. Since the findings do not indicate the presence of an individually eligible historic resource or historic district eligibility containing the subject property, demolition of the subject building involves no adverse impacts to historic resources and no mitigation is required.

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**Appendix 1**

**HISTORICAL RESOURCE EVALUATION REPORT SCOPE OF WORK**  
***ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND APPROVAL***

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Transmittal To: Patrick McGrew Date: January 25, 2007  
Address: 674 South Grenfall Road  
Palm Springs, California 92264

The proposed scope of work for the 1645 Pacific Avenue Project,  
Case No. \_\_\_\_\_,  
dated \_\_\_\_\_ is hereby

- Approved as submitted
- Approved as revised and resubmitted
- Approved subject to comments below
- Not approved, pending modifications specified below and resubmitted

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Planning Department* *April Hesik, Preservation Technical Specialist*

Comments: Incorporate (as appropriate) historic district information contained in 1600 Block of Pine street HRER; 1461 & 1465 Pine Street EIR, including references to May 2004 Section 106 Review by Architectural Resources Group; and 1522 Bush Street EIR by Page & Turnbull, July 2004.

**Note: A copy of this approval and the final scope of work is to be appended to the Historical Resource Evaluation report. The Department advises consultants and project sponsors that review of the draft report may identify issues or concerns of other City agencies not addressed in the scope of work hereby approved, and that the scope of work may need to be modified to accommodate such additional issues.**

Scope of Work Approval Form

**Appendix 2.**  
**Historic Consultant Qualifications Statement**

Professional Qualifications Standards: The Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61 defines the minimum education and experience required to perform historic preservation identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities. The minimum professional qualifications in architecture are a professional degree in architecture plus at least two years full-time experience in architecture; or a State license to practice architecture.

Patrick McGrew received his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Oklahoma in 1965. He has been actively engaged in the architectural profession, specializing in historic preservation, since then. McGrew has been a licensed architect in the State of California since 1970, as well as a holder of the NCARB (national licensing) certificate. He possesses an in-depth knowledge of all procedures and standards utilized in the identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment of historic properties as evidenced by his lengthy career known for the depth and breadth of accumulated architectural / historical knowledge. He places a high value on the objectivity and completeness of his written works. He has several years experience in research, writing, practicing and teaching architecture with academic and historical agencies and institutions. He has made a substantial contribution through research and publication of a body of scholarly knowledge in the field of California architectural history. His experience has included the preparation of numerous historic research reports, National Register nominations, and San Francisco Landmark nominations, as well as the preparation of plans and specifications for architectural preservation projects. He regulates his firm through the use of Ethics Standards developed by the Society of Architectural Historians.

Patrick McGrew's knowledge and reputation in the field of historic preservation provided the basis his public service as the long-time President of San Francisco's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, which extended over an eighteen year span beginning in 1978 when he was first appointed by then-Mayor George Moscone; he served the next ten years under Mayor Dianne Feinstein. Although he served less than a year under Mayor Art Agnos, it was Agnos who declared November 17, 1991 "Landmarks of San Francisco Day" to honor the publication of McGrew's first book, *Landmarks of San Francisco* (Harry Abrams, New York, 1991.) Reappointed in 1992 by Mayor Frank Jordan, McGrew served four more years. This acknowledgment by government and/or regulatory agencies, combined with Mr. McGrew's impressive list of publications on California's historic architecture, is a testament to his proficiency as a leading expert in California architectural history. He is a member of the Society of Architectural Historians, and has received many awards for his work during a distinguished career. In 1995, his book *The Historic Houses of Presidio Terrace*, received an award of honor from the California Heritage Council. Upon the occasion of Mr. McGrew's induction into the City Club of San Francisco's Wall of Honor, Mayor Willie Brown declared November 30, 2003 as 'Patrick McGrew Day' in San Francisco, and a Commendation from the United States Senate was presented in recognition of McGrew's 'distinguished career and outstanding contributions to the City of San Francisco.'

**Appendix 3**

**State of California The Resources Agency**  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION HRI #  
**PRIMARY RECORD**  
NRHP Status Code  
Other Listings Review Code Reviewer Date

**Primary #**

Page 1 of 2 \*Resource Name or #: San Francisco Riding Academy

P01. Other Identifier: None

P02. Location: Unrestricted

a. County: San Francisco

b. Address: 1645 Pacific Avenue City: San Francisco Zip: 94109

c. Other Locational Data: Block and Lot 695 / 13

P03a. Description: *(Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)* The subject building was purpose-built as a Riding Academy. The date of the original construction of the building is circa 1895, based upon information found in the 1895 Sanborn-Perris Map Company maps, the Handy Block Books and the corresponding City Directories. Following the earthquake, the Riding Academy relocated to Seventh Avenue and the building was put into a new use. A 1906 building permit that cites the building's post-quake repairs by architect James Francis Dunn. Later alterations in 1922 and especially 1963 have resulted in the building's current appearance. The building is located near the southeast corner of Pacific Avenue and Van Ness, and together with the adjacent 1661 Pacific Avenue

(which was a later addition) contains 27,275 gross square feet that occupies a rectangular footprint 125' wide by 127' - 8" deep. The building is two stories tall and is approximately 26' feet in height. The south, east and west exterior walls of the structure appear to be unreinforced masonry with no architectural embellishments. The west wall has a few window openings into the structure at 1661 Pacific. The building's principal facade faces onto Pacific Avenue and is detailed with cement plaster with industrial sash windows, all of which date from the 1963 remodel.

P03b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

P11. Report Citation: None

P04. Resources Present:

Building

P05b. Description of Photo: (3/4 View; 2006)

P06. Date Constructed: 1895 Sources: Sanborn Maps & City Directories

P07. Owner and Address:

P08. Recorded by

McGrew / Architecture

674 S. Grenfall Rd.

Palm Springs, Ca 92264

760.416.7819

P09. Date Recorded: December 2006

P10. Survey Type: Individual Building Survey



Contemporary photograph of 1645 Pacific (left) and 1661 Pacific

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1645 Pacific Avenue

#### Appendix 4

<b>State of California The Resources Agency</b>	<b>Primary #</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION</b>	<b>HRI#</b>
<b>BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD</b>	

Resource Name: 1645 Pacific Avenue

B1. Historic Name: San Francisco Riding Academy

B2. Common Name: None

B3. Original Use: Riding Academy B4. Present Use: Same

B5. Architectural Style: Renaissance Revival

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

Built in 1895, the building has received numerous alterations

B7. Moved: No

B8. Related Features: None

B9a. Architect: Unknown; Alts: J. F. Dunn b. Builder: Unknown

B10. Significance: Theme: Post-quake reconstruction Area: Van Ness Avenue

Period of Significance: 1963 Alterations Property Type: Commercial

Applicable Criteria: None (*Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.*)

Criterion A/1: Archival research yielded no information indicating sufficient association with historic events and developments significant to national or state history. Although the property is one of many that were built along San Francisco's Automobile Row (Van Ness Avenue), such association is not sufficiently significant to be considered Register-eligible as either an event or a pattern of events in the city or county's early development. The subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

Criterion B/2: Research yielded no evidence indicating an association with significant historic individuals or entities. Though the building is associated with the Hind Estate Co., the building was simply a speculative venture and has no association with Hind's accomplishments. For the purposes of CEQA, the building does not have significant ties to any single person of significance. Therefore, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

Criterion C/3: 1645 Pacific Avenue in its current altered form does not sufficiently embody distinctive characteristics of any style, type, or period nor does it possess high artistic value, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction to be individually eligible. Similarly, although the building's 1906 alterations were the work of early San Francisco architect Francis J. Dunn, they have been lost under subsequent alterations and the property therefore cannot be said to represent the work of a master. Based upon this information, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

Criterion D/4: The property at 1645 Pacific Avenue has not yielded, nor is it likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history. While this criterion is generally applied to archeological resources, it applies to any building, structure, or object whose physical fabric itself can be considered an artifact. The 1645 Pacific Avenue property contains no visually-observable, above-ground elements whose physical fabric includes unique materials, provides information on special building techniques, or has the potential to provide information about our past. Therefore, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.



State of California The Resources Agency Primary #  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION HRI#  
**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

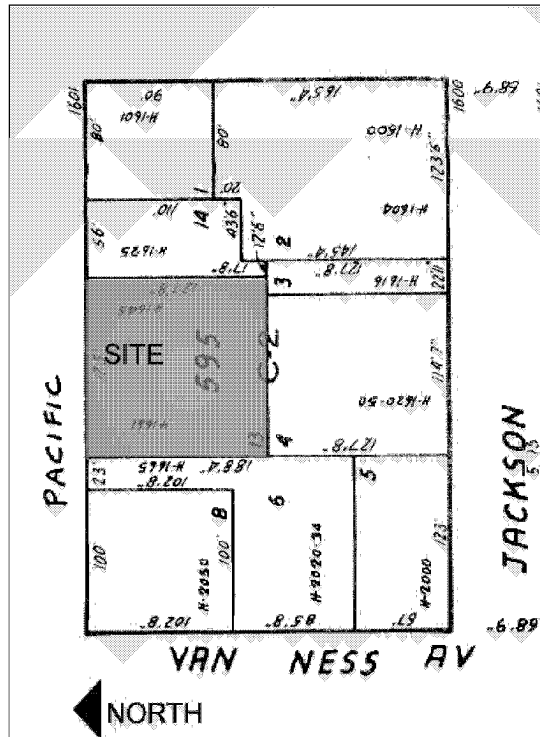
B11. Additional Resource Attributes: None

B12. References: San Francisco General Plan: Van Ness Avenue Element

B13. Remarks: None

B14. Evaluator: McGrew / Architecture  
674 S. Grenfall Road  
Palm Springs 92264  
760.416.7819

Date of Evaluation: December 2006



Sketch Map w/ North Arrow: The subject property is shaded.

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1645 Pacific Avenue

## Appendix 5

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Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1645 Pacific Avenue

San Francisco Department of Public Works  
Building permit records for 1645 Pacific Avenue..  
San Francisco Main Library: Daniel Koshland History Room  
Appendix 6: Biography and Table of Buildings by James Francis Dunn (1874-1921)

Architect Dunn was profiled by writer David Weinstein in his series "Signature Style" in the San Francisco Chronicle and much of the information contained in his article is excerpted here. Born to Martin and Julia Dunn, J. F. Dunn was raised by his widowed mother at 727 (later 747) Minna Street in the working-class, largely Irish South of Market neighborhood. No record of Dunn's educational background exists and it is therefore assumed that he acquired his professional skills in the traditional way before formal education became a requirement, he apprenticed to an existing architectural firm. Although no details survive as to who his early architectural mentors were, he appears to have mastered the popular 19<sup>th</sup> century Second Empire French architectural style during his apprenticeship. By 1897, the 23 year-old Dunn had entered into a partnership with architect Albert Schroepfer, with whom he shared offices in the Call Building at Third and Market Streets, a building that housed many of San Francisco's more famous architectural firms. Dunn & Schroepfer specialized in designing flats and commercial buildings. Later, after the partnership with Schroepfer ended, Dunn practiced for a time as a sole proprietor, and later still he entered into a partnership with Daniel Kearns.

From the beginning Dunn's designs were noticeably French: his 1347 McAllister is one of at least three similar sets of Second Empire flats that he designed in San Francisco. The detailing of the McAllister Street flats is elaborate, with a recessed entry beneath a seashell canopy that surmounts curvilinear concrete stairs. Dunn is best known for these Second Empire apartments and flats with curved balconies, delicate ironwork and exuberant decoration, replete with animal and human faces. Although the style was popularized by several of San Francisco's better-known architects, among them the Beaux-Arts trained Albert Pissis, Conrad Meussdorffer, George Applegarth and others, the style became Dunn's hallmark, largely because of the baroque and fluid quality of his designs.

The Second Empire was an architectural style that was popular in America during the Victorian era, reaching its zenith between 1865 and 1880, and so named for the French elements in vogue during the era of the Second French Empire. Following the trend of styles becoming popular later in the West, the Second Empire arrived in California around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this country, the Second Empire style usually featured a short mansard roof, the most noteworthy link to the style's French roots. The exteriors were usually finished in stone, although wood was more commonly used on California variations of the style. The more elaborate examples frequently featured paired columns as well as sculptured details around the entrances, windows and dormers, and examples of this abound in Dunn's work. The purpose of the ornament was to make the structure appear imposing, grand and expensive. Dunn's buildings at 791 Central Avenue and 1250 Pine Street each feature a large flattened arch similar to those found on the Paris Opera house, the building that was ground zero for the style. During the years 1855 - 1875, the Second Empire style was almost universally adopted by architects and builders, and used for nearly every type of housing project from cottages to farmhouses to elaborate mansions; the style was also adapted to commercial and industrial uses. Churches were the only building type for which it was never used. The style was considered a radical departure from

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1645 Pacific Avenue

previous styles during its period of popularity, and some consider it to be the first truly modern style of architecture in American history.

Dunn created buildings in other styles, but none of these variations became his signature in the way that the Second Empire did. In Dunn's early works he utilized the Victorian railroad car flats layout, a plan form that he would later reject in favor of more creative layouts. Through the work of Dunn and others, apartment houses became very popular in San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and fire, and this building type became a staple of his career: "This community spirit ... avoiding duplication of effort, is the rational way of doing things," he wrote, "whether in governmental affairs, selling oil, transportation or housing." Dunn designed these apartment buildings with a variety of amenities; his *Inverness Apartments*, at 1405 Van Ness Avenue, even provided residents with a saltwater pool. In 1913 Dunn designed the remarkable if uncharacteristic *Alhambra Apartments* for August Schleicher, a decorator. Borrowing only distantly from the details on the historic 12<sup>th</sup> Century Alhambra in Grenada, Spain, the building features Moorish columns and decorative motifs.

Despite the elaborate exteriors of Dunn projects, he considered himself to be a pragmatic designer who focused on demonstrated planning principles that maximized his clients' return on their investments. In articles for the *Architect and Engineer* magazine, he spoke against shoddy workmanship, cheap materials, skinflint developers, shady real estate speculators and incompetent contractors. Builders who used brick, not reinforced concrete, he called "criminals," and, referring to the 1906 quake, warned about "that April day again." Dunn argued that developers would actually save money by employing high-quality architects. "Every dollar expended on architectural excellence," he vowed, "can be reaped many fold in higher rental." Soundproofing was essential, he said, and telephones should never be placed against party walls. Public halls and stairways should be carpeted for noise -- but shouldn't be too wide. "A couple of inches too much will mean a waste of several hundred dollars in carpets in a six-story building," he noted.

Dunn appears to have been a misanthrope and social critic as well as an architect who was eager to display his knowledge by quoting the ancient Greek legislator Solon or the french novelist Gustave Flaubert. He appreciated a wide range of architecture including New York's Beaux-Arts City Hall, New England's Colonial homes, the fortresses in St. Augustine, Fla., New Orleans' French Quarter, Mission Santa Barbara, and Bernard Maybeck's Palace of Fine Arts. In later years he traveled throughout the United States, and abroad, and his work continued to reflect trends that were current in New York and Paris.

Dunn personal life was not a happy one: his wife, Gertrude, with whom he had a son, sued for divorce in 1908, claiming abandonment. She also charged that Dunn had fraudulently transferred title to three flats he'd designed and owned on Haight Street to his brother. Following the divorce, Dunn lived at the Union League Club until his death at St Francis Hospital (age 47) after a brief illness. He was survived by his mother and his son. Dunn died before his final and most famous building, the *Chambord Apartments*, was completed. It is interesting that his former partner, Albert Schroeffer (not his then current partner Daniel Kearns) was called in to complete the project. During a 1950s rehabilitation project, the *Chambord* lost some of its exterior embellishments in a failed modernization attempt. But, in the early '80s the building was restored by architects Marquis Associates of San Francisco. Today it is City Landmark No. 106.

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1645 Pacific Avenue

To properly establish Dunn's place in the hierarchy of early San Francisco architects, *National Register Bulletin 15* was consulted: " a master is a figure of generally recognized greatness in a field, a known craftsman of consummate skill, or an anonymous craftsman whose work is distinguishable from others by its characteristic style and quality. While Dunn is known and respected for his Second Empire work, he remains a relatively obscure figure who achieved a level of greatness in his field. His early works suggested a promising future that seems to have never arrived, but under this definition of a master, Dunn is minimally qualified. For a property to be register-eligible as the work of a master, it must express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his work, or a particular idea of theme in his craft. Although a few of Dunn's buildings have been listed in some of San Francisco's various surveys, and the *Chambord* is a city landmark, the subject building is not representative of any particular phase, aspect or theme in the development of Dunn's career.

Building by James Francis Dunn

Address	Construction Date	Comments
Green	1901	Flats - Weinstein
Pine 1250	1919	Flats
Pine 1201	1909	Flats
Webster 2411	1915	Apartments
Franklin 2415-17	1915	Flats
McAllister 1347	1900c	Flats
Haight 347-49 (Alts)	1902	Kostura Hayes Valley Report
Haight 1677-81	1905	Flats + Store
Leavenworth 1201	1908-09	
Leavenworth 630 (Marchbank Apts)	1917	Apartments
Sacramento 1290 (Chambord)	1921	Apartments
Geary 850 (Alhambra)	1914	with Daniel Kearns
Central 791	1904	
Pacific 574 (Spider Kelly's Saloon)	1907	Jackson Square
Pacific Avenue 1645 (Alterations?)	1907	Garage (One of only 2 non-residential buildings?)

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1645 Pacific Avenue

Address	Construction Date	Comments
Baker 405	?	
Post 798	1913	Dunn & Kearns
Hyde 625	1920	
Minna 727 (Dunn Residence?)	1906	Weinstein
Van Ness 1405 (Inverness apartments)		

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1645 Pacific Avenue

Building Permits for 1645 Pacific Avenue

Date	Application or Permit #	Description of Work Done	Owner	Comments
06/28/1906	574	Alterations & repairs: 1 ½ story brick bldg to have walls repaired with brick and restored to their original condition	Hind Estate Co., Trust	Architect: J. F. Dunn
02/27/1917	75217	Install new skylight (\$85)	Rudolph Spreckels	Electric garage. G. K. Jensen, Builder
12/06/1922	112177	Alterations to brick bldg <sup>10</sup>	A. A. Tisconia	August G. Headman, Architect
11/10/1933	4327	Alterations	A. A. Tisconia	
02/26/1935		Neon Sign	A. A. Tisconia	
03/02/1935	10748	Widen front openings	A. A. Tisconia	Norman Green, Engineer
03/30/1936	17875	Neon Sign	A. A. Tisconia	
08/12/1957		Erect Sign	Vann's Body Shop	
11/10/1961		Install Spray Booth	Reynold C. Johnson	
06/24/1963	284043	Sign	Reynold C. Johnson, Volkswagen	
10/06/1969	373721	OH Door Systems; Misc Interior Alts	Carlsen - Klemm Body Shop	
07/13/1981	102299	Parapet Work	Tenant: Pacific Telephone	
02/09/1981	468261	Int Alts: Re-roofing		
10/07/1988	194652	Parapet	Callan, Stroud & Dale	
09/13/1993	729696	Re-roofing	Lee Mah	

<sup>10</sup>“The area between walls exceeds 10,000 sf - change plans to comply. Place fire door at each side of opening in division walls. No mention made of south wall which is in a serious condition and should be rebuilt or strengthened with buttresses. Change plans to comply with this condition. Also, procure supervisor's permit.”

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**Figure 1** Front Facade of 1661 Pacific Avenue

**Historic Resource Evaluation Report:**

**1661 Pacific Avenue  
San Francisco, California**

**Prepared for:  
Nick Podel Company  
1201 Howard Avenue, Suite 201  
Burlingame, California 94010**

**Prepared By:  
Patrick McGrew  
McGREW / ARCHITECTURE  
764 South Grenfall Road  
Palm Springs, California 92264  
760.416.7819**

**Administrative Draft:  
January 2007**

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Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1661 Pacific Avenue

### **Summary – Overview of report and conclusions**

At the request of the Nick Podell Company, McGrew / Architecture has prepared an Historic Resource Evaluation Report (HRER) of the building located at 1661 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco. Originally built as to house Corrigan's Depository in 1907, the building is being evaluated for its potential as an historical resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The earliest record is a February 25, 1907 building permit that cites "Permit to erect 1 Story frame Building." To prepare this HRER, McGrew / Architecture utilized the *City and County of San Francisco's CEQA Review Procedures for Historic Resources (Final Draft October 2004)* outlined as follows:

1. Introduction;
2. Building Background data
3. Past Historic Evaluations;
4. New Evaluation of the Existing Structure as a Potential Historic Resource;
5. Context and Relationship;
6. Project-Specific Impacts;
7. Cumulative Impacts;
8. Mitigation.

The project as proposed includes the demolition of the structure, to be replaced by....(Podell to supply project description)

The facts uncovered in the research indicate that the building does not appear to be eligible for either the National or California Registries under any of the four criteria, as well as through a loss of integrity. The existing building has not been rated by any of the rating systems that apply to the area, and the building is not mentioned in the Van Ness Plan, an element of the Planning Department's General Plan. Since the findings do not indicate the presence of an historic resource, compliance with the Secretary's Standards and mitigations are not required.

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1661 Pacific Avenue

**1. Introduction** - Basic brief description of what is being proposed with the project.

Project Description: To supplied by Nick Podell Company

## **2. Building Background Data**

**Historic Name:** Corrigan's Depository

**Common Name:** None

**Address:** 1661 Pacific Avenue

**Block and Lot No.** 695 / 13

**Date of Construction:** 1907

**Architectural Style:** Indeterminate: 1963 building permits documents alterations to front facade.

**Architect:** None; the permit indicates that the building was designed by owner George Hind.

**Building Type / Original and subsequent Uses:** Corrigan's Depository / Carpet Co. / Auto Sales / Precision Repairs / Repair Garage

**Original Owner:** George Hind

**Subsequent Owners / Tenants (dates of ownership):** United Capital Corp. (1963); Precision Repair Co. (1967); Automotive Repairs (Current).

**Period of Significance<sup>1</sup>:** 1963 Alterations

**Architecture** (*Building Description including exterior materials and features, interior, setting.*)

The subject building, built to house Corrigan's Depository is one of many small commercial structures that were built in the immediate neighborhood during its development years. The building was constructed in 1907 to the designs of owner George Hind. It is located near the southeast corner of Pacific Avenue and Van Ness, and together with the adjacent 1645 Pacific Avenue (with which it was merged) contains 27,275 gross square feet that occupies a rectangular footprint 125' wide by 127' - 8" deep. The building is one story tall (approximately 18' feet in height) and its footprint is 25' wide by 127'-8" deep. The north, south and west exterior walls of the structure are frame with no openings or architectural embellishments; there exists no east wall as the building utilizes the wall of the adjacent building to complete the enclosure. The building's principal facade faces onto Pacific Avenue, but its original design is unknown. The building permit history indicates alterations to the facade in 1963 and 1967 that include "Alter front; new steel frame and rolling door" and "Installation of new Show Windows." Today, the facade is a simple rectangle

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<sup>1</sup>If an older building has been remodeled to the extent that its appearance dates from the time of the remodeling, it can only be eligible if the period of significance corresponds with the period of the alterations.

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1661 Pacific Avenue

approximately 18 feet tall, decorated only with a band of tile in a modified Greek key pattern, surmounted by a single course of sheet tin shaped to resemble Spanish tile roofing. A large central opening is filled by a single overhead door flanked by a man-door with industrial transom above. No "show windows" are currently found on this elevation.

#### Character-Defining Features

The building appears to have been stripped of any original character-defining features of significance; the following list comprises the surviving character-defining features of the building that have survived, but are of no particular significance.

##### General

Rectangular footprint and massing  
Flat roof

##### **History:**

The building was built as a financial investment by George U. Hind. Its earliest known use was as Corrigan's Depository. Later uses included a Carpet Company, Auto Sales, Precision Repairs, and a Repair Garage. Under the current proposal, the building will be demolished.

### **3. Past Historic Evaluations**

The property is not now, nor has it been previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or the California Register of Historic Resources (California Register). It is not included in the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS). There are a number of surveys and lists of San Francisco structures that are considered to have attained a degree of architectural, historical, and/or contextual importance. An examination of these lists or surveys indicates that the building is not listed in San Francisco's *1976 Architectural Survey* and was not included in the 1968 Junior League Survey (the basis of the book *Here Today*). Additionally, it was not rated in any SF Heritage Surveys and not listed in the Planning Department's Van Ness Plan Element of the General Plan.

### **4. Evaluation of the Existing Potential Resource (using National and California Register Criteria)**

#### **Historic Preservation Regulations and Criteria (*Historical Resource as Defined under CEQA*)**

Historic architectural surveys provide information about existing properties that may be of value to a community. Designation or listing on a registry of cultural and/or historical resources may occur if a building is found to be of value; designation or listing can also serve to alert potential land developers of the public's interest in such properties as changes to listed properties generally require review by public boards and/or commissions. .

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was originally enacted in 1970 in order to inform, identify, and disclose to decision-makers and the general public the effects a project may have on the environment. Historical resources are included in the comprehensive definition of the environment under CEQA. Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a) an historical resource is defined as.

Any resource listed in or determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources by the State Historical Resources Commission; or

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1661 Pacific Avenue

Any resource included in a local register of historical resources pursuant to §5020.1 (k) of the California Public Resources Code; or

Any resource identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the criteria set forth in §5024.1 (g) of the California Public Resource Code; or

Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California.

**National Register:** (The *National Register of Historic Places* (NRHP) evaluates a property's historic significance based on the following four criteria:)

Criterion A (Event): Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Criterion B (Person): Properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Criterion C (Design/Construction): Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Criterion D (Information Potential): Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Should a property be determined to be of historic significance, an NRHP evaluation requires a determination of physical integrity, or the authenticity of an historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. Integrity consists of seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Since integrity is based on a property's significance within a specific historic context, an evaluation of a property's integrity can only occur after historic significance has been established.

**California Register:** [California Office of Historic Preservation's Technical Assistance Series #6, *California Register and National Register: A Comparison*, outlines the differences between the federal and state processes. The *California Register of Historical Resources* (CRHR) evaluates a resource's historic significance based on the following four criteria:]

Criterion 1 (Event): Resources associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Criterion 2 (Person): Resources associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.

Criterion 3 (Design/Construction): Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values.

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1661 Pacific Avenue

**Criterion 4 (Information Potential):** Resources that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Like the NRHP, a CRHR evaluation requires a determination of physical integrity, but only after historic significance has been established. California's integrity threshold is slightly lower than federal requirements, resulting in some historically significant resources that do not meet NRHP integrity standards, but are eligible for CRHR listing. Any resource listed in or determined eligible for listing in the NRHP is automatically eligible for listing in the CRHR.

To be potentially eligible for *individual* listing on the NRHP and/or CRHR, a structure must usually be over 50 years old, must have historic significance, and must retain its physical integrity. The building at 1661 Pacific Avenue is over 50 years old, having been built (reconstructed) in 1906. The building meets the age but none of the historic criteria as indicated in the following analysis and further, does not meet the integrity requirements.

**Criterion A/1:** Archival research yielded no information indicating sufficient association with historic events and developments significant to national or state history. Although the property is one of many that were built on or near San Francisco's Van Ness corridor after the events of April 1906, such association is not sufficiently significant to be considered Register-eligible as either an event or a pattern of events in the city or county's early development. The subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

**Criterion B/2:** Research yielded no evidence indicating a meaningful association with significant historic individuals or entities. The building's principal association is with George U. Hind (1871-1950). Hind was the son of Robert R. And Mary Hind, and came to California in 1890 with his parents from Hawaii. The family business was shipping, and they were financially successful, residing in an upper-class neighborhood on outer Harrison Street in the Mission District. George inherited his father's estate and shipping interests and ultimately became a partner with James Rolph, Jr, son of California Governor "Sunny Jim" Rolph, whose fortune was also made in shipping. However, the building addition at 1661 Pacific Avenue was simply a speculative venture and has no important association with Hind's accomplishments. For the purposes of CEQA, the building does not have primary or significant relationship to any persons of significance in local, state or national history. Therefore, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

**Criterion C/3:** 1661 Pacific Avenue is a substantially altered example of a 1907 commercial building that was purpose-built as a depository and later housed other uses including a carpet company and several automobile-oriented uses. It does not sufficiently embody distinctive characteristics of a style, type, or period nor does it possess high artistic value, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction to be individually eligible. Consequently, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

**Criterion D/4:** The property at 1661 Pacific Avenue has not yielded, nor is it likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history. While this criterion is generally applied to archeological resources, it applies to any building, structure, or object whose physical fabric itself can be considered an artifact. The 1661 Pacific Avenue property contains no visually-observable, above-ground elements whose physical fabric includes unique materials, provides information on special building techniques, or has the potential to provide information about our past. Therefore, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

**Integrity –** Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must not only be shown to be significant under National and/or California Register

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criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. Historic properties either retain integrity (that is, convey their significance) or they do not. Within the concept of integrity, the National Register criteria recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. Determining *which* of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when of the property is significant. If the building had been substantially altered, a discussion of the seven aspects of integrity (location, design, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship, association) would be undertaken to determine if the building retains its integrity. But, based upon existing photographs and building permits<sup>2</sup>, it appears that the building's integrity has been lost, and further analysis is unnecessary.

## 5. Context and Relationship

Historic context: as related in the Van Ness Plan: "In 1849, William Eddy extended the 50 Vara<sup>3</sup> land division of the downtown to Larkin Street, replicating street and block dimensions created by earlier surveys of Jean Vioget and Jasper O'Farrell. The Western Addition, as the sand dunes and chaparral west of Larkin were called, subsequently surveyed by several private groups before the city-sponsored Van Ness Survey was completed in the mid-1850's. Originally known as Marlette Street, the centerpiece of this extended 50 Vara survey was re-named in honor of Mayor James Van Ness. Situated in the valley between Nob and Russian Hills and Pacific Heights, Van Ness Avenue was intended to function as the city's central north-south spine. Consequently, the survey shaved off parts of the blocks on both sides of Van Ness to create a 125' wide avenue.<sup>4</sup>

"Despite grand hopes for the new Boulevard, development of properties along the avenue was slow and the U.S. Coast Survey of 1869 indicated only scattered structures. In the 1860's Van Ness began at Market Street and terminated at the U.S. military reserve at Black Point. Since principal growth corridors radiated out from the downtown, it was a long time before cross-town streets such as Van Ness could become important arteries. The 1884 Coast and Geodetic Survey shows buildings concentrated along intersecting streets with cable car lines such as Fulton, McAllister, Ellis and Geary. Throughout this period, Polk Street, rather than Van Ness, functioned as the principal commercial street of the mid-city, serving people living on Nob and Russian Hills. It is conceivable that the width of Van Ness — like that of Market Street — discouraged its use as a neighborhood shopping street.

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<sup>2</sup>A request for copies of building permits from the City's Microfilm department has resulted in 6 building permits. These permit applications details changes that have occurred to the building over time, indicating that 1963 is when the current front facade was built. The loss of integrity resulting from these changes is sufficient to preclude Register-eligibility, if the building were to qualify under any of the four criteria.

<sup>3</sup>A cellular unit, known as Vara, provided a set of dimensions which allowed for grid expansion throughout the South of Market and northern part of San Francisco. In the latter area, the 50 Vara survey consisted of blocks measuring 412'6" by 275', or six 50 Vara squares whose sides measured 137'6". Street widths were commonly 25 Vara, or 68'9", although this varied considerably.

<sup>4</sup>The creation of a 125' wide boulevard out of a 68'9" street necessitated shaving off parts of the blocks on either side of Van Ness. Thus, 28'9" was taken from the block extending to Polk Street and 27'9" was garnered from the western block extending to Franklin Street. The choice of 125 feet for Van Ness may have been influenced by the widths of major streets in eastern cities, such as Broadway in New York and Market Street in Philadelphia



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1661 Pacific Avenue

“Thus, as opposed to the heterogeneous development of the avenue in the twentieth century, the nineteenth century land pattern primarily consisted of wooden dwelling units. While lower Van Ness Avenue was soon occupied by dense working class housing, the middle and upper reaches of the avenue became characterized by residences of the wealthy. Italianate homes were constructed during the 1870's and 1880's, and were followed by large Queen Anne [style] residences in the 1890's. Prominent families who owned homes on Van Ness included the Spreckels, Crocker and Gianninis. Aside from residences, the only large buildings shown on the 1899-1905 Sanborn Maps were the Mechanics Library, Concordia Club, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, First Presbyterian Church and St. Dunston's Hotel. Livery stables, small industries, a school and other miscellaneous uses were located on side streets.

“Industrialization of Rincon Hill — caused by the Second Street Cut of 1869 — and shortage of available land on Nob Hill encouraged the development of a new high-income neighborhood, and Van Ness Avenue became a logical choice largely stimulated by proximity to downtown, availability of undeveloped parcels, and access to cable car lines. Furthermore, in the mid-1870's a row of Eucalyptus trees was planted along each side of the avenue, contributing to its park-like ambience.

Van Ness Avenue's basic land use pattern continued until 1906. The earthquake and fire of that year destroyed most of San Francisco and would likely have gone on to burn Pacific Heights had it not been for the great width of Van Ness Avenue, a natural fire break. During the first day of the fire soldiers had attempted fire breaks further east of Van Ness Avenue, all of which proved unsuccessful. They tried again at Van Ness on the second day, dynamiting every building on its east side south of Filbert Street, containing most of the fire and saving the Western Addition: the area between Sutter and Washington Streets was not contained until Franklin Street, and the area south of Golden Gate Avenue was not contained until Octavia Street.

“Immediately after the fire, burned out businesses from the downtown moved to either Van Ness Avenue or Fillmore Street. Surviving mansions on the west side of Van Ness were converted into stores, and temporary commercial buildings were quickly constructed on the east side of the street. The city's major department stores — City of Paris, the White House, and the Emporium — all located here, as did the Bank of California and the Anglo California Bank.

“By 1909, however, the reconstruction of the downtown district led to the return to downtown of businesses that were temporarily located on Van Ness Avenue, the second transformation of the avenue's land use pattern in less than three years. Far from returning to its earlier history as a residential boulevard, new development along the lower and middle sections of Van Ness consisted of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses. The 1911 Sanborn Map illustrates the heterogeneous uses — including auto body, wagon and bicycle repair shops — as well as numerous undeveloped sites. A National Guard Armory was located at the southeast corner of California Street while clubs and hotels were scattered along the mid section of the avenue. In contrast to these areas, the upper section of Van Ness, north of Jackson Street, retained its residential character.

“In addition to several surviving nineteenth century mansions, private homes and large apartment buildings in a wide variety of architectural styles were constructed following the 1906 disaster. After 1915 and the Panama Pacific Exposition, residences were constructed along Van Ness north of Francisco Street. By the 1920's — aside from several large apartment buildings — automobile-oriented businesses emerged as the most common use between Civic Center and Jackson Street. Earlier, between 1904 and 1908 many small auto showrooms and garages were built along Golden Gate Avenue between Hyde and Van Ness, and after 1910 several small showrooms and repair garages located on Van Ness itself. The growing automobile industry soon demanded more grandiose buildings, and by 1911 prominent architects such as McDonald and Applegarth, Willis Polk and Bernard Maybeck began designing automobile showrooms here.

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“After the Second World War, the designation of Van Ness as U.S. Highway 101 led to the use of the avenue as a primary vehicular thoroughfare and the concurrent re-orientation of businesses towards citywide and regional markets.”<sup>5</sup> Since the late 1970’s, automobile-oriented businesses have declined as some auto showrooms relocated to other areas within the city....” As a response to this decline, much of the avenue was re-zoned to encourage high-density residential development, and many new examples of this building type were built along the avenue in the intervening years, resulting in a significant change in the area’s historic context as “automobile row.” Many movie theaters and restaurants opened up alongside the automobile showrooms; some of the former showrooms were even converted to restaurants, theaters and offices, and some were demolished to provide sites for the new residential developments. The subject building has not been cited as making a contribution to the character of the Van Ness Corridor context.

**6. Project-Specific Impacts** (Compliance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation)

A project that involves an historic resource will qualify for a categorical exemption from environmental if the proposed change or alteration is minor and if the implementation of the alteration will meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures. However, application of the Secretary’s Standards to this project is not required because the building cannot be considered to be an historic resource under CEQA.

**7. Cumulative Impacts**

This section of the report is to be utilized if the subject building is located within an established (or potential) historic district and if the subject building is proposed for demolition. The subject property is adjacent to but not located within the boundaries of the Van Ness Plan. Although the Van Ness Plan provides lists of both Significant and Contributing structures, the numerous historic resources in the area must be considered more of a thematic grouping than an actual historic district. Since the Van Ness Plan was written, substantial change has come to the Avenue, at least partly in response to the zoning changes proposed by the Plan. The primary stated goal of the *Van Ness Avenue Area Plan* (Policy 1) is the creation of significantly higher residential densities in the Van Ness Avenue Corridor through new construction on vacant or underutilized lots. Some of the less significant automobile showrooms have been demolished and replaced with high-density residential structures. Some of the Significant and Contributing structures have been adapted to new uses with the result that the character and feel of Auto Row remaining largely intact. If the subject property were a contributor to a potential historic district, it would not have to be considered unique, rare, or even an increasingly at-risk type of structure, for its loss to lead to an adverse cumulative impact, if an historic district were indeed present.

According to the Planning Department, “Several historic studies (EIRs, a Section 106 Review and other Historic Resource Evaluations)<sup>6</sup> in the past few years have identified a *potential* automotive-themed historic district in the area along Van Ness Avenue from Civic Center to Jackson Street including parallel streets on the east and west and perpendicular streets. And, in reference to a near-by project, “The buildings on the proposed project [1461 and 1465 Pine Street] site are also consistent with the strong automotive theme of the Van Ness Avenue corridor. As automobiles grew in popularity during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Van Ness Avenue between the Civic Center and Jackson Street emerged as the center for automobile sales, service, and repairs in San Francisco. As described in the Van Ness Avenue Area Plan of the *San Francisco General Plan*, significant showrooms were located on Van Ness Avenue itself, while smaller ancillary uses such as garages

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<sup>5</sup> Van Ness Plan

<sup>6</sup> Memorandum: “Historic Resource Evaluation Response: 1634-1644, 1650-1656, 1660, 1670 and 1690 Pine Street by MEA Planner: Tammy Chan. Dated August 2, 2006.

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
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and smaller showrooms proliferated on surrounding side streets. The Section 106 Review report for the area, completed in May 2004 by Architectural Resource Group<sup>7</sup>, found the automobile-theme buildings in this area "contribute to the strong automotive theme of the neighborhood, relating garages, repair shops, car showrooms, and motels catering to visitors traveling by car." The document concludes that the automotive theme buildings in the area "appear to be eligible as contributing buildings to a National Register Historic District, which has not as yet been fully identified or researched."

The **National and California Registers define (traditional) Historic Districts** as possessing "a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development." Based upon this definition, because the Van Ness Corridor is not united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development; and because it is not a unified entity which can convey a visual sense of an overall historic environment; and because of numerous contemporary intrusions and because no records have been compiled regarding the integrity of these properties, and because the area is not geographically definable and distinguishable from surrounding properties, and because the area does not consist of a single geographic area of contiguous historic properties, the Van Ness Corridor fails to qualify as a traditional continuous or discontinuous National or California Register Historic District.

**Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code** does not specifically state that a local historic district must comply with the definition and requirements of a National Register Historic District. However, Section. 1004.1 of the Planning Code requires that "Initiation of designation shall be by the Board of Supervisors or by a resolution of intention by the Planning Commission, the Art Commission or the [Landmarks Preservation] Advisory Board, or on the verified application of owners of the property to be designated or their authorized agents." Initiation by the Planning staff is not included on the list of those who may initiate designation. The code section continues: "Where such an application is submitted for designation of a historic district, the application must be subscribed by, or on behalf of, at least 66 percent of the property owners in the proposed district." A Van Ness Corridor local historic district has not been included on the Landmarks Board's Work Program, and the requirement of support by 66 percent of the property owners in the proposed traditional historic district renders the possibility of designation unlikely.

The potential for qualifying the Van Ness Corridor as a National, California or San Francisco Register thematic historic district is examined as follows :

**Thematic Historic Districts Defined:**<sup>8</sup> In some instances, buildings that are not significant in themselves become important when viewed as part of a larger collection. Typically residential neighborhoods with high concentrations of similar homes having a common history are candidates for historic districts. Traditional (geographical) historical districts have been listed on the National Register, California Register, and the San Francisco Register contains 11 traditional historic districts. Generally, these traditional historic districts are

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<sup>7</sup>Two requests to Architectural Resources Group for information upon which their Section 106 Review defining a thematic historic district (authored in the firm's Pasadena Office) was made, but as yet there has been no response.

<sup>8</sup>Rather than use the term "thematic historic district," the National Register utilizes the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) which is the core of a Multiple Property Submission. In 1986, this format replaced the previously used Thematic and Multiple Resource Area formats. Multiple Resource Area (MRA) refers to a format used to register groups of properties related by historic association or theme. This format was replaced by the National Park Service in 1986, and the current format is used to register groups of properties that are related by historic association or theme, but are not contiguous. The Multiple Property Documentation Form contains the historic context, and the background historic, geographical, and architectural information about the group of properties being nominated, and is accompanied by one or more Registration Forms that describe the specific properties. Together, the MPDF and its associated Registration Forms comprise a Multiple Property Submission. Examples of National Register thematic historic districts include Carnegie Libraries and federal Post Offices located throughout the country.

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based upon easily recognized geographical boundaries: e.g., all contiguous properties or structures on a particular block or in a recognizable neighborhood or district.

By contrast, “thematic historic districts” include buildings or structures that are related to each other through a common theme, but which are not necessarily all located within a contiguous area. Thematic districts recognize notable buildings or structures which, as a group, reflect significant influence upon the character or development of a neighborhood, city, state or the nation. These so-called thematic historic districts (so called because they are not districts *per se*, because they are non-contiguous and do not share a specific geography, but instead include a related group of resources) contain buildings that are related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way by a common theme related to their historic context, architectural style, development period, or other characteristics. Thematic historic districts have no boundaries, and all of the structures that share the similarity in a city, state or nation are considered contributors.

As is the case with traditional historic districts, thematic districts can be based on architecture or history. An architectural / historical theme has been suggested for San Francisco’s collection of automobile showrooms and supporting buildings along the Van Ness Avenue corridor, although San Francisco has not established any regulation procedures or ever designated a local thematic district. For a building or structure to be nominated to a thematic historic district or grouping, it must fit the historic theme. For example, in the case of the Van Ness corridor automotive-themed potential historic district, the nominated building or structure must have been purpose-built as an automobile showroom or other automobile-themed use. Documentation to that effect is essential and could involve original deeds, building permits, newspaper articles, city directory listings, documented recollections of original owners or their family members, etc. Additionally, the building or structure would need to be at least 50 years old, and must retain a degree of integrity sufficient to convey its significance.

The nomination and approval process for a property or structure to be designated as part of a thematic district would be essentially the same as that for a stand-alone landmark, a process that does not always result in the designation or listing of the resource. Each property or structure would have to be nominated with its own with its own set of nomination documents, although the various review bodies involved might consider several sets of nominations as a thematic group at the same time. A thematic district process would require guidelines for inclusion as well as a certificate of appropriateness application for any exterior modifications to the property or structure should the nomination/designation be completed. Modifications to Article 10 in regard to the 66% owner consent may be required if the multiple properties are described as an historic district. Potential may exist for an automotive-themed historic district centered on the Van Ness Avenue corridor and beyond, but to date, the full extent of the thematic district remains undocumented and unresearched.

The building evaluated in this report was built in 1907 as Corrigan’s Depository which is not an auto-related use. Over the years it was converted to many different uses, some of which were auto-related, but the subsequent uses are incidental. The building cannot be considered a contributor to an auto-themed historic district, because, to qualify as a contributing structure to an automotive-themed historic district, a structure must demonstrate a pattern or primary importance intimately connected with the theme, such as the auto showrooms. Other buildings directly connected to the theme, but of secondary importance, such as garages, paint shops or repair shops that contained original exterior and interior features such as garage doors and/or auto ramps designed especially for the automotive work, would also be considered contributing structures. Buildings that are only incidental to the auto-themed historic district, or buildings altered to accommodate auto-related uses, would obviously not qualify for the potential auto-related thematic district

## 8. Mitigation

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1661 Pacific Avenue

Mitigation is required to ameliorate any project-specific or cumulative impacts. Since the facts concerning the subject building do not support a finding that the building is an historic resource, there are no adverse impacts. Consequently, no mitigation is required.

## **9. Conclusions**

The project as proposed includes the demolition of 1661 Pacific Avenue. The proposed project requires the demolition of 1645 Pacific Avenue. The forgoing analysis indicates that the building is not a significant example of a post earthquake automobile-oriented structure, and is not unique, rare, or an increasingly at-risk type of structure. The facts contained in the research indicate that the building does not appear to be individually eligible for either the National or California Registries under any of the four criteria, and its integrity is sufficiently compromised to preclude Register-eligibility. The existing building is not rated by SF Heritage, and is not listed in the Van Ness Plan, an element of the Planning Department's General Plan. Although the Van Ness Plan contains lists of Significant and Contributing structures, the Plan does not constitute an historic district as defined by the California or National Registers. Since the findings do not indicate the presence of an individually eligible historic resource or historic district eligibility containing the subject property, demolition of the subject building involves no adverse impacts to historic resources and no mitigation is required.

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1661 Pacific Avenue

**Appendix 1**

**HISTORICAL RESOURCE EVALUATION REPORT SCOPE OF WORK**  
***ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND APPROVAL***

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Transmittal To: Patrick McGrew Date: January 25, 2007  
Address: 674 South Grenfall Road  
Palm Springs, California 92264

The proposed scope of work for the 1661 Pacific Avenue Project,  
Case No. \_\_\_\_\_,  
dated \_\_\_\_\_ is hereby

- Approved as submitted
- Approved as revised and resubmitted
- Approved subject to comments below
- Not approved, pending modifications specified below and resubmitted

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*April Hesik Planning Department April Hesik, Preservation Technical Specialist*

Comments: Incorporate (as appropriate) historic district information contained in 1600 Block of Pine street HRER; 1461 & 1465 Pine Street EIR, including references to May 2004 Section 106 Review by Architectural Resources Group; and 1522 Bush Street EIR by Page & Turnbull, July 2004.

**Note: A copy of this approval and the final scope of work is to be appended to the Historical Resource Evaluation report. The Department advises consultants and project sponsors that review of the draft report may identify issues or concerns of other City agencies not addressed in the scope of work hereby approved, and that the scope of work may need to be modified to accommodate such additional issues.**

Scope of Work Approval Form

## **Appendix 2: Historic Consultant Qualifications Statement**

Professional Qualifications Standards: The Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61 defines the minimum education and experience required to perform historic preservation identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities. The minimum professional qualifications in architecture are a professional degree in architecture plus at least two years full-time experience in architecture; or a State license to practice architecture.

Patrick McGrew received his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Oklahoma in 1965. He has been actively engaged in the architectural profession, specializing in historic preservation, since then. McGrew has been a licensed architect in the State of California since 1970, as well as a holder of the NCARB (national licensing) certificate. He possesses an in-depth knowledge of all procedures and standards utilized in the identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment of historic properties as evidenced by his lengthy career known for the depth and breadth of accumulated architectural / historical knowledge. He places a high value on the objectivity and completeness of his written works. He has several years experience in research, writing, practicing and teaching architecture with academic and historical agencies and institutions. He has made a substantial contribution through research and publication of a body of scholarly knowledge in the field of California architectural history. His experience has included the preparation of numerous historic research reports, National Register nominations, and San Francisco Landmark nominations, as well as the preparation of plans and specifications for architectural preservation projects. He regulates his firm through the use of Ethics Standards developed by the Society of Architectural Historians.

Patrick McGrew's knowledge and reputation in the field of historic preservation provided the basis his public service as the long-time President of San Francisco's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, which extended over an eighteen year span beginning in 1978 when he was first appointed by then-Mayor George Moscone; he served the next ten years under Mayor Dianne Feinstein. Although he served less than a year under Mayor Art Agnos, it was Agnos who declared November 17, 1991 "Landmarks of San Francisco Day" to honor the publication of McGrew's first book, *Landmarks of San Francisco* (Harry Abrams, New York, 1991.) Reappointed in 1992 by Mayor Frank Jordan, McGrew served four more years. This acknowledgment by government and/or regulatory agencies, combined with Mr. McGrew's impressive list of publications on California's historic architecture, is a testament to his proficiency as a leading expert in California architectural history. He is a member of the Society of Architectural Historians, and has received many awards for his work during a distinguished career. In 1995, his book *The Historic Houses of Presidio Terrace*, received an award of honor from the California Heritage Council. Upon the occasion of Mr. McGrew's induction into the City Club of San Francisco's Wall of Honor, Mayor Willie Brown declared November 30, 2003 as 'Patrick McGrew Day' in San Francisco, and a Commendation from the United States Senate was presented in recognition of McGrew's 'distinguished career and outstanding contributions to the City of San Francisco.'

**Appendix 3**

**State of California The Resources Agency**  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION HRI #  
**PRIMARY RECORD**  
NRHP Status Code  
Other Listings Review Code Reviewer Date

**Primary #**

Page 1 of 2 \*Resource Name or #: Corrigan's Depository

P01. Other Identifier: None

P02. Location: Unrestricted

a. County: San Francisco

b. Address: 1661 Pacific Avenue City: San Francisco Zip: 94109

c. Other Locational Data: Block and Lot 695 / 13

P03a. Description: *(Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)* The subject building was constructed for Corrigan's depository, one of many small commercial structures that were built in the immediate neighborhood during its development years. The building was built in 1907, designed by its owner George Hind. It is located near the southeast corner of Pacific Avenue and Van Ness, and together with the adjacent 1645 Pacific Avenue (to which it was added in 1907) contains 27,275 gross square feet that occupies a rectangular footprint 125' wide by 127' - 8" deep. The building is one story tall (approximately 18 feet.) The south and west exterior walls of the structure are of frame construction with no openings or architectural embellishments. The building's principal (north) facade faces onto Pacific Avenue but has been substantially altered, according to the building permits.

P03b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

P04. Resources Present:

Building

P05b. Description of Photo:(3/4 View; 2006)

P06. Date Constructed:1907 Sources: Building Permit

P07. Owner and Address:

P08. Recorded by

McGrew / Architecture

674 S. Grenfall Rd.

Palm Springs, Ca 92264

760.416.7819

P09. Date Recorded: December 2006

P10. Survey Type: Individual Building Survey

P11. Report Citation: None



Contemporary photograph of 1645 Pacific (left) and 1661 Pacific



#### Appendix 4

<b>State of California The Resources Agency</b>	<b>Primary #</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION</b>	<b>HRI#</b>
<b>BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD</b>	

Resource Name: 1661 Pacific Avenue

B1. Historic Name: Corrigan's Depository

B2. Common Name: None

B3. Original Use: Depository      B4. Present Use: Garage

B5. Architectural Style: Indeterminate (Altered)

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

Built in 1907, the building has received numerous alterations

B7. Moved: No

B8. Related Features: None

B9a. Architect: (Designer) George Hind      b. Builder: Unknown

B10. Significance: Theme: 1960s alterations      Area: Van Ness Avenue

Period of Significance: 1960s alterations      Property Type: Commercial

Applicable Criteria: None (*Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.*)

Criterion A/1: Archival research yielded no information indicating sufficient association with historic events and developments significant to national or state history. Although the property is one of many that were built along San Francisco's Automobile Row (Van Ness Avenue), such association is not sufficiently significant to be considered Register-eligible as either an event or a pattern of events in the city or county's early development. The subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

Criterion B/2: Research yielded no evidence indicating an association with significant historic individuals or entities. Though the building is associated with George Hind, a wealth developer, the building was simply a speculative venture and has no distinctive association with Hind's accomplishments. For the purposes of CEQA, the building does not have significant ties to persons of significance in California history. Therefore, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

Criterion C/3: Though 1661 Pacific Avenue remains a functioning example of a post-quake garage building, it does not sufficiently embody distinctive characteristics of any style, type, or period nor does it possess high artistic value, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction to be individually eligible. Therefore, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

Criterion D/4: The property at 1661 Pacific Avenue has not yielded, nor is it likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history. While this criterion is generally applied to archeological resources, it applies to any building, structure, or object whose physical fabric itself can be considered an artifact. The 1661 Pacific Avenue property contains no visually-observable, above-ground elements whose physical fabric includes unique materials, provides information on special building techniques, or has the potential to provide information about our past. Therefore, the subject property does not qualify as Register-eligible under this criterion.

State of California The Resources Agency Primary #  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION HRI#  
**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

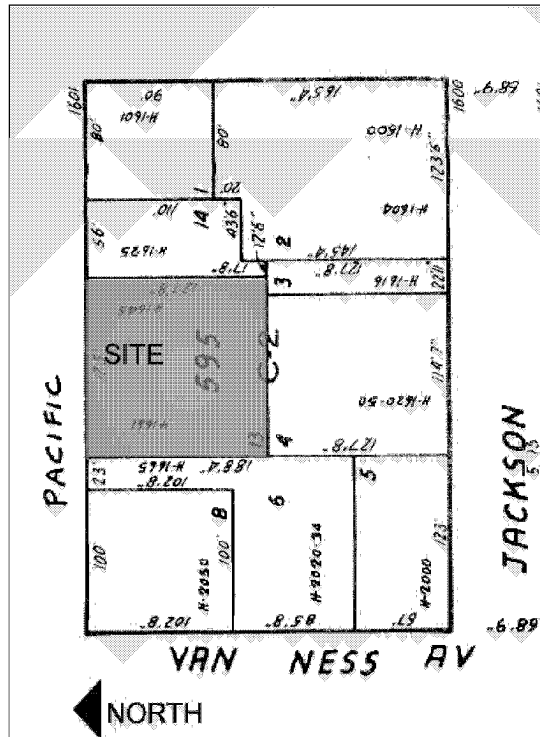
B11. Additional Resource Attributes: None

B12. References: San Francisco General Plan: Van Ness Avenue Element (Not included).

B13. Remarks: None

B14. Evaluator: McGrew / Architecture  
674 S. Grenfall Road  
Palm Springs 92264  
760.416.7819

Date of Evaluation: December 2006



Sketch Map w/ North Arrow: The subject property is shaded.

Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1661 Pacific Avenue

#### **Appendix 5: Bibliography**

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Historic Resource Evaluation Report:  
1661 Pacific Avenue

**Appendix 6:** Building permit records for 1661 Pacific Avenue.

Date	Application or Permit #	Description of Work Done	Owner	Comments
02/25/1907	8368	Permit to Erect 1 story (frame) \$2,000.00 25' x 127'	George Hind (Design by Owner)	To be occupied as Corrigan's Depository
02/26/1963	278028	Alter front; New Steel frame & Rolling Door	United Capital Corp	No architect
12/12/1967	351148	Installation of Show Windows	Precision repair Co	
11/17/1989	208127	Shoring and underpinning relating to work on adjacent property	Henry Blackwood	
02/22/1990	210951	Rebuild South Property Line Wall	John Callan	
10/01/1992	707227	Re-roofing	Pia Lee	

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Appendix 4:

**NOVEMBER 2007 PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION RESPONSE**

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# PLANNING DEPARTMENT

City and County of San Francisco • 1660 Mission Street, Suite 500 • San Francisco, California • 94103-2414

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COMMISSION CALENDAR  
INFO: 558-6422

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SFGOV.ORG/PLANNING  
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NOV 26 2007

## MEMORANDUM: Historic Resource Evaluation Response

NICK PODELL COMPANY

**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  
415-558-6291  
dan.dibartolo@sfgov.org

### Preparer / Consultant

Name: Patrick McGrew  
Company: McGrew/Architecture  
Address: 764 South Grenfall Rd.  
Palm Springs, CA 92264  
Phone: 760-416-7819

### Owner

Name: Nick Podell  
Company: 1645 Pacific Avenue LLC  
Address: 1201 Howard Street Ste 201  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
Phone: 650-581-6600  
Fax: 650-581-2158

### 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:**

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

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**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
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**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.

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**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.

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

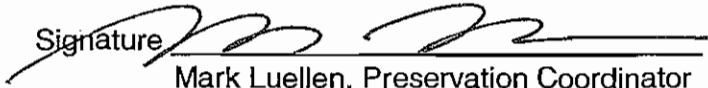
Yes  No  Unable to determine

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.

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**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

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**Appendix 5:**  
**APRIL AND JULY 2008**  
**PAGE & TURNBULL MEMORANDA**

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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE	28 April 2008	PROJECT NO.	08019
TO	Mark Luellen	PROJECT NAME	1661 Pacific Avenue
OF	San Francisco Planning Department 1650 Mission Street, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor San Francisco, CA 94103	FROM	Rebecca Fogel Page & Turnbull
CC	Nick Podell	VIA	E-mail

REGARDING: HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION RESPONSE, 1661 PACIFIC AVENUE

This memorandum has been prepared at the request of the Nick Podell Company for the proposed project at 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue (APN 0695/013) in San Francisco's Van Ness Avenue commercial district. The lot contains two buildings, 1645 and 1661 Pacific Avenue, both located on the south side of Pacific Avenue between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street. A Historic Resource Evaluation Report (HREER) was prepared by McGrew/Architecture in January 2007 to evaluate the historic significance of the buildings, and a Historic Resource Evaluation Response memorandum (#2007.0519E) was issued by the City and County of San Francisco Planning Department on November 15, 2007, that further evaluated the proposed project. The following memorandum responds to the issues raised in the Planning Department's November 2007 memorandum, and provides additional analysis of the proposed project and its effect on the building at 1661 Pacific Avenue and the Van Ness Avenue "Auto Row" potential historic district.

*Proposed Project*

In response to concerns voiced by the Planning Department and the community, the project sponsors have altered the proposed project to include partial retention of 1661 Pacific Avenue. Instead of demolishing the building, the entire primary façade will be retained and rehabilitated; a 15' setback will separate the new construction from the historic building and will preserve the existing massing and relationship to the street; and the building will be used as the automotive entrance to the garage associated with the new construction, preserving the building's historical association with automotive uses. The building is currently in poor condition, but the portions of the building that will be retained as part of the proposed project will be strengthened to improve the longevity of the building's character-defining features. Additionally, further investigation by Page & Turnbull revealed that the building was erected using haphazard construction techniques, lacks a unified structural system, and has only three remaining walls; the retention of additional historic fabric would therefore be difficult.

*Current Historic Status*

1661 Pacific Avenue is not currently listed in any local, state, or national historical registers. 1661 Pacific Avenue is not specifically listed in the Van Ness Avenue Area Plan as a significant building or as a contributor to the potential California Register-eligible Van Ness Avenue "Auto Row" historic district. However, according to the Planning Department's November 2007 memorandum, "1661 Pacific Avenue is a contributor to the potential "Auto Row" historic district," and is significant as a small automotive building constructed in the period following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire.

Character-defining features are the characteristics which give a building the ability to convey its historical significance; in the case of 1661 Pacific Avenue, the building is significant as a contributor

to the “Auto Row” potential historic district. The character-defining features of 1661 Pacific Avenue include the building’s rectangular footprint, massing and volume, architectural details on the Pacific Avenue façade, and automotive use; these features are also consistent with the overall patterns and themes that characterize the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” potential historic district.

*Van Ness Avenue Area Plan & “Auto Row” Historic District*

The San Francisco General Plan addresses land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety, and also contains several individual Area Plans that deal specifically with various neighborhoods of the City. The Van Ness Avenue Area Plan was originally adopted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1986 and amended on July 7, 1995. The Van Ness Avenue Area Plan identifies specific policies addressing a variety of development issues facing the area, and one of the stated priorities of the Area Plan is the preservation of architecturally significant resources. The Van Ness Avenue Area Plan also lays the groundwork for the creation of a potential Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” historic district, centered on the high concentration of automotive uses found along the Van Ness Avenue Corridor. Buildings within the Van Ness Avenue Corridor were surveyed and placed into three categories: Significant, Contributory and Non-Contributory. However, the exact boundaries of the potential historic district were not established as part of the Area Plan, and the district’s resources have not been fully documented.

The Planning Department expressed concern that the proposed project (specifically the demolition of 1661 Pacific Avenue) would have a significant impact on the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” potential historic district. Currently, 1661 Pacific Avenue is not specifically listed as a significant building or as a contributor to the “Auto Row” district, but its automotive use and design are consistent with the patterns found elsewhere in the district. In response to the Planning Department’s comments, the project sponsors have redesigned the plans for 1661 Pacific Avenue to ensure that the “Auto Row” district is not affected by the proposed project. While it will no longer be used as an automotive repair shop, 1661 Pacific Avenue will be used as the automotive entrance for a residential garage; as the building has had numerous and varied automotive uses since its construction, this qualifies as a compatible use for the building. Additionally, the project design includes a 15’ setback to preserve the building’s massing and relationship to the street, and preserves the building’s feeling as an early twentieth century garage.

As designed, the proposed project would not have a significant impact on the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” potential historic district. While the project calls for the removal of some historic fabric at 1661 Pacific Avenue, the retention of the façade, the use of a deep setback as part of the new construction, and the continued use of the building as a garage with an automotive entrance will help preserve the building’s character-defining features. Additionally, the project will still allow 1661 Pacific Avenue to continue to convey the associations with automotive uses it has enjoyed for most of its 100-year history, and will allow the building to continue to complement the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” district’s design and role as an important commercial and automotive corridor in San Francisco. Finally, the project will preserve the existing character & feeling of the potential historic district, and will not affect the district’s overall integrity, ability to convey its historical significance, or eligibility for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

Furthermore, 1661 Pacific Avenue is located within Subarea 2 (Broadway to Bay Street) of the Van Ness Avenue Area Plan, and the proposed project is consistent with the goals and recommendations of this section of the Area Plan. For example, Policy 2.1 states, “Infill with carefully designed, medium density new housing,” and calls for new developments that provide dense residential uses with neighborhood-serving retail uses at the ground floor, which is fulfilled by the proposed project.

The Van Ness Area Plan also offers objectives and policies for conservation, recognizing the changes to the historic automotive uses due to the economic evolution of the area and calling for the creative adaptive re-use and preservation of significant buildings. The proposed project also attempts to adhere to the policies enumerated in this section:

- Policy 11.1 –Avoid demolition or inappropriate alteration of historically and architecturally significant buildings.
- Policy 11.2 –Allow relaxation of the residential use requirements and of parking requirements for buildings designated as city landmarks.
- Policy 11.3 –Encourage the retention and appropriate alteration of contributory buildings.
- Policy 11.4 –Encourage architectural integration of new structures with adjacent significant or contributory buildings.

As described above, the project at 1661 Pacific Avenue includes the retention of the façade, the use of a deep setback as part of the new construction, and the continued use of the building as a garage with an automotive entrance to help preserve the building’s character-defining features and fulfill these policies, especially Policy 11.3. The new work is designed in a contemporary style, but the height, scale, massing, and features are compatible with the architecture of the “Auto Row” historic district, and are well within the range found in the surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, the preservation of the façade, massing, and automotive use of 1661 Pacific Avenue will help the new construction integrate into the neighborhood, as detailed in Policy 11.4.

*Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*

In the memorandum from the Planning Department dated November 15, 2007, it is stated that “the proposal for 1661 Pacific Avenue is not consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.” 1661 Pacific Avenue is not individually eligible for listing in any national, state, or local historical registers, but according to the Planning Department, it is “a historic resource because it is a contributor to a potential California Register Historic District.” The project has since been redesigned to address some of the concerns listed above, and should be re-evaluated for compliance with the Standards. The proposed project should be evaluated for its effect on the integrity of the character-defining features of 1661 Pacific Avenue, and an analysis of the project’s compliance with the Standards must be viewed in regards to the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” district as a whole.

The Planning Department was specifically concerned that the project is “not consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, in particular Standards 1, 2, 5, and 9.” The following analysis applies each of these Standards to the proposed project, which has been redesigned to address this concern:

**Rehabilitation Standard 1:** *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.*

The historical use of the property and the surrounding historic district will be preserved by the proposed project. The automotive use of 1661 Pacific Avenue is the main feature that relates this property to the “Auto Row” historic district, which contains a high concentration of buildings that were constructed and converted for automobile use. The proposed project will convert the building at 1661 Pacific Avenue into a garage entrance for the adjacent residential units, which is compatible

with the historical use of the building and with the automotive theme of the historic district. This change requires little change to the primary façade, or to the overall spatial relationship of the building to the rest of the district.

As designed, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 1.

**Rehabilitation Standard 2:** *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize the property will be avoided.*

The historic character of 1661 Pacific Avenue which links this building to the “Auto Row” historic district will be retained and preserved. The preservation of the primary façade, the compatible new automotive use, and the setback of the new construction will preserve the building’s relationship to the street and will not affect the overall integrity of the historic district. The proposed project includes the alteration of some historic fabric in the rear portion of the building, which will be removed and replaced with new construction. However, the building has undergone numerous alterations since its original construction, and the material that will be removed is not essential to the building’s ability to convey its historical significance, and will not affect the historic character of the “Auto Row” district.

As designed, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 2.

**Rehabilitation Standard 5:** *Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques that characterize 1661 Pacific Avenue and the surrounding “Auto Row” historic district will not be compromised by the proposed project. Despite the demolition of the rear portion of the building (which is in poor condition and retains little historical integrity), the proposed project will still result in the preservation of the building’s character-defining features and relationship to the “Auto Row” historic district. According to the HRER prepared by McGrew/Architecture, the building has been significantly altered over the years, and there is little historic fabric remaining behind the façade. Additionally, the structural system of the building is not an exceptional example of construction techniques or craftsmanship; the building only has three remaining walls of various materials and ages, and it shares the east wall with the adjacent building. The proposed project at 1661 Pacific Avenue will include the preservation of the Pacific Avenue façade, setbacks to preserve the building’s massing, and the continuation of the existing automotive use, all of which will preserve the building’s ability to convey its significance as a contributor to the “Auto Row” historic district. Furthermore, the proposed project will not affect any of the distinctive materials, features, finishes, or construction techniques that characterize the district as a whole.

As designed, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 5.

**Rehabilitation Standard 9:** *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and environment.*

The proposed project is located within the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” potential historic district, and the new construction on the site will not affect the integrity of the district. The “Auto Row” district is characterized by a variety of volumes, heights, and architectural styles, but is unified by the high concentration of automotive uses—ranging from grandiose automobile showrooms to small,

simple, utilitarian repair shops and garages. Most buildings in the district also retain the basic form and architectural detailing from their original construction. The new work is designed in a contemporary style to be differentiated from the old, but the height, scale, massing, and features are compatible with the architecture of the “Auto Row” historic district, and are well within the range found in the surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, the preservation of the façade, massing, and automotive use of 1661 Pacific Avenue will help the new construction integrate into the neighborhood, and will not destroy the features that link this property to the overall historic district. As designed, the proposed project appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 9.

### *Conclusion*

In response to concerns voiced by the Planning Department and the community, the project sponsors have redesigned the plans for 1661 Pacific Avenue to ensure that the “Auto Row” district is not affected by the proposed project. The new design includes partial retention of 1661 Pacific Avenue, the rehabilitation of the entire façade, and the creation of a 15’ setback to separate the new construction from the historic building. These measures will preserve the building’s existing details, massing, and relationship to the street. While it will no longer be used as an automotive repair shop, 1661 Pacific Avenue will be used as the automotive entrance for a residential garage; as the building has had numerous and varied automotive uses since its construction, this is a compatible use for the space. The integration of the character-defining features of 1661 Pacific Avenue into the new project will preserve the building’s feeling as an early twentieth century garage and will allow it to continue to contribute to the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row.” Finally, the project will preserve the existing character & feeling of the potential historic district, and will not affect the district’s overall integrity, ability to convey its historical significance, or eligibility for listing in the California Register. As discussed in the previous section, it is also the opinion of Page & Turnbull that as designed, the project at 1661 Pacific Avenue is in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, and will not impact the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” potential historic district.



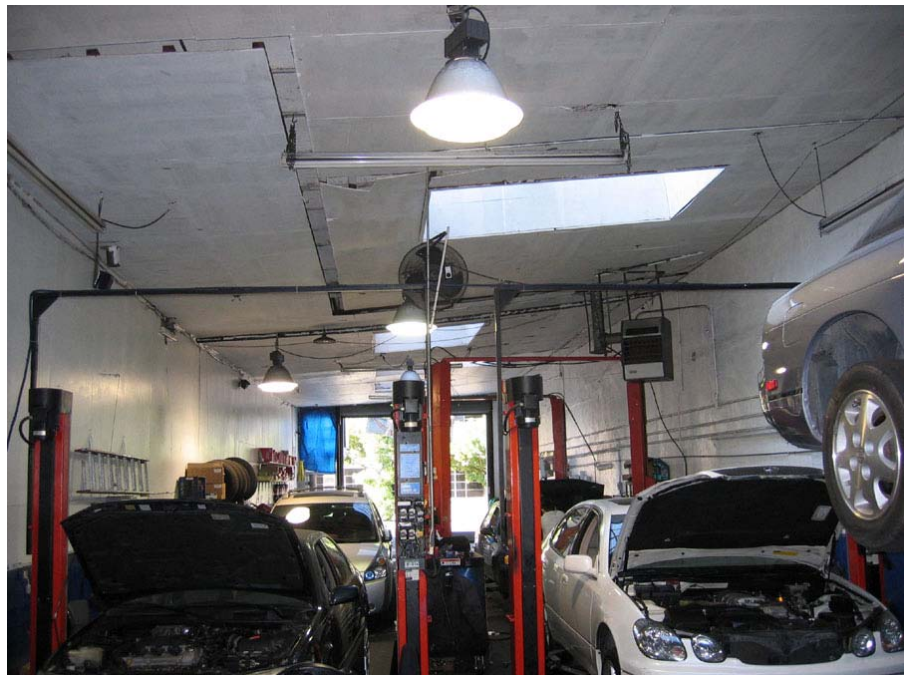
1661 Pacific Avenue, view east along Pacific Avenue.  
Page & Turnbull, January 2008.



1661 Pacific Avenue, view of primary façade.  
Page & Turnbull, January 2008.



1661 Pacific Avenue, detail of ornamentation.  
Page & Turnbull, January 2008.



1661 Pacific Avenue, view of interior.  
Page & Turnbull, March 2008.



1661 Pacific Avenue, detail of east wall. Note: this wall is shared with the adjacent building at 1645 Pacific Avenue.  
Page & Turnbull, March 2008.



1661 Pacific Avenue, detail of wood framing of west wall.  
Page & Turnbull, March 2008.

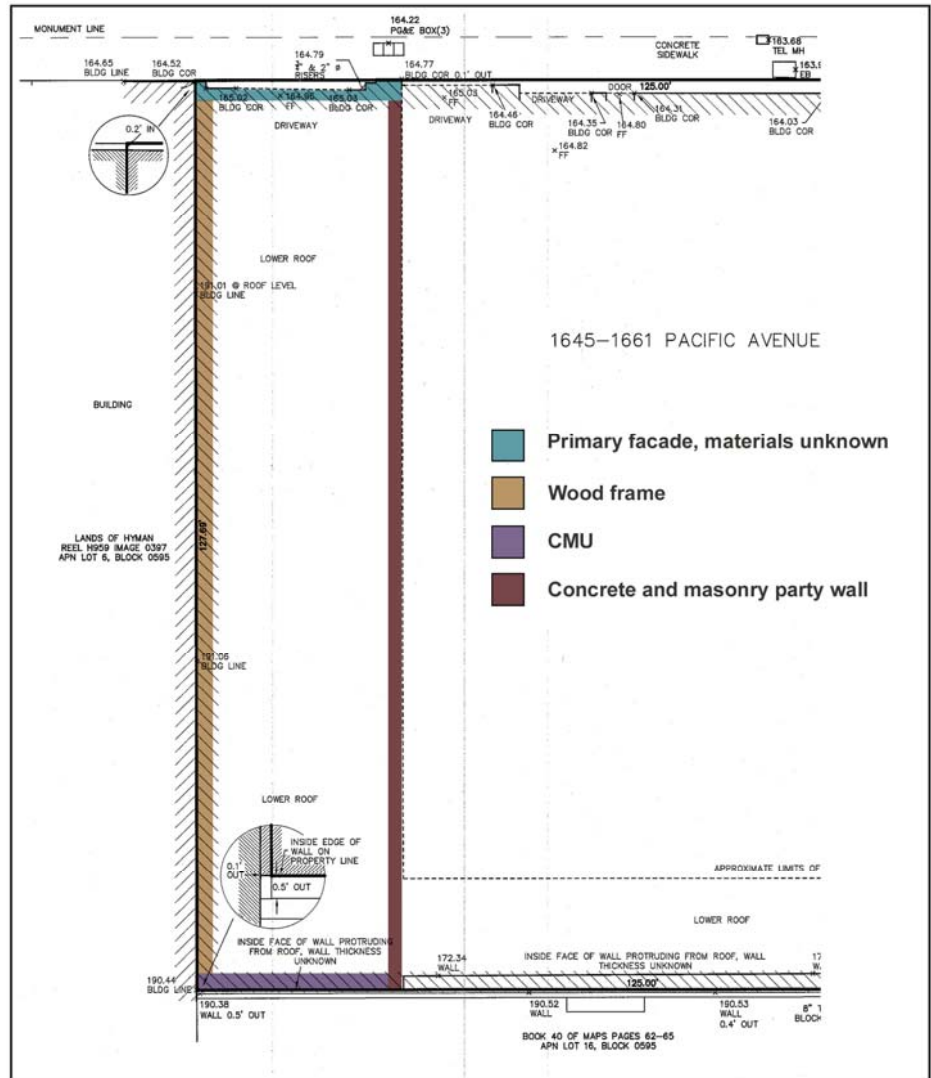




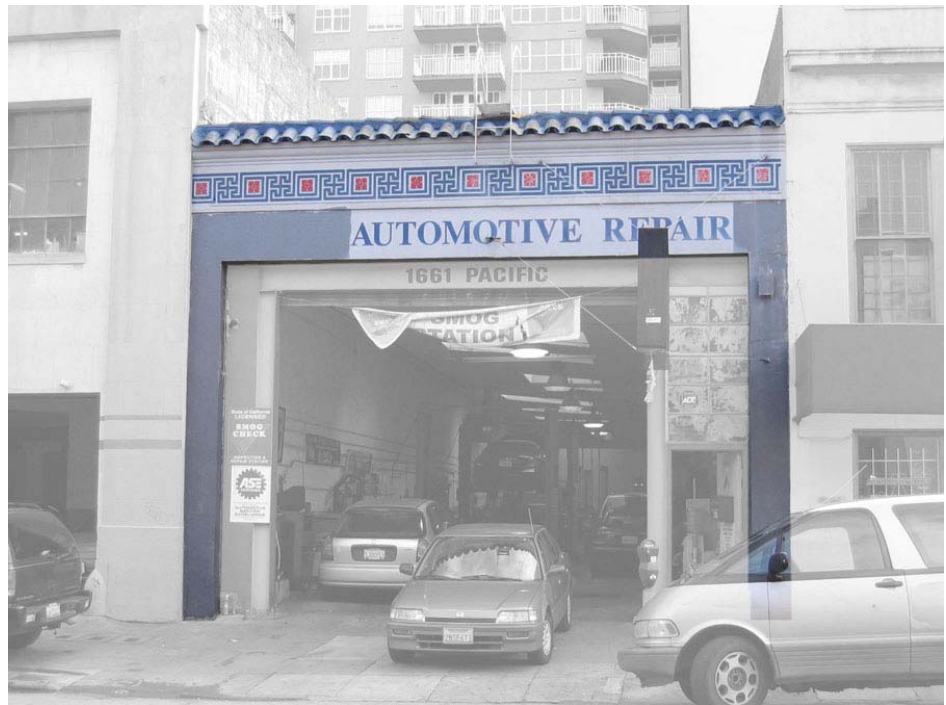
1661 Pacific Avenue, detail of concrete and masonry of east wall.  
Page & Turnbull, March 2008.



1661 Pacific Avenue, detail of concrete blocks of south wall.  
Page & Turnbull, March 2008.



1661 Pacific Avenue, diagram of construction types.  
Page & Turnbull, April 2008.



1661 Pacific, diagram of primary façade. Note: Highlighted portions will be retained as part of the proposed project.  
Page & Turnbull, April 2008.



Sketch of proposed project at 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue. Note: Garage entrance at 1661 Pacific Avenue, setback of new construction, and retention of original ornament will preserve the character-defining features of the existing building.  
Page & Turnbull, April 2008.

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE	14 July 2008	PROJECT NO.	08019
TO	Tim Frye	PROJECT NAME	1645-1661 Pacific Avenue
OF	San Francisco Planning Department 1650 Mission Street, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor San Francisco, CA 94103	FROM	Rebecca Fogel Page & Turnbull
CC	Nick Podell	VIA	E-mail

REGARDING: 1645-1661 PACIFIC AVENUE AND THE VAN NESS "AUTO ROW" HISTORIC DISTRICT

This memorandum has been prepared at the request of the San Francisco Planning Department for the proposed project at 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue (APN 0595/013) in San Francisco's Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial District. The following memorandum provides additional analysis of the proposed project and its effect on the Van Ness Avenue "Auto Row" potential historic district, and is a supplement to Page & Turnbull's evaluation memorandum dated April 23, 2008.

*Van Ness Avenue "Auto Row" Historic District*

The Van Ness Avenue Area Plan, which is an element of the San Francisco General Plan, lays the groundwork for the creation of a potential Van Ness Avenue "Auto Row" historic district, centered on the high concentration of automotive uses found along the Van Ness Avenue Corridor. Buildings within the Van Ness Avenue Corridor were surveyed and placed into three categories: Significant, Contributory and Non-Contributory. However, the exact boundaries of the potential historic district were not established as part of the Area Plan, and the district's resources have not been fully documented. A historic resource survey is currently being undertaken by the City of San Francisco to fully document the area, finalize the boundaries of the district, identify contributing and non-contributing properties, and establish a historic context statement. This survey effort is expected to be completed in spring 2009. Prior independent historic resource studies have been completed for individual buildings in the area and have established some context for the "Auto Row" historic district, but the district will not be officially recognized until the Planning Department's survey is complete.

In the meantime, a list of preliminary character-defining features of the Van Ness Avenue "Auto Row" historic district has been prepared by the Planning Department, covering use, size, scale, materials, and style. As defined by the Planning Department, the character-defining features of the Van Ness Avenue "Auto Row" historic district include, but are not limited to:

- Loft-like concrete structures to accommodate ample space for showrooms, repair bays, and parts storage;
- All buildings are clad in masonry or are of concrete construction – many feature decorative elements in terracotta, cast stone, or other masonry trim;
- Buildings are often rendered in simplified Classical or Renaissance Revival styles. Building facades incorporate ornament in varying degrees, and often employ classically-inspired detailing;
- A very large proportion of glass-to-masonry, particularly on the lower levels where automobile display rooms were located;
- Window openings are punched and while first- and second-floors traditionally feature large

expanses of glass in wide showroom openings, windows on upper floors are traditionally grouped or ganged together in similarly large openings;

- Very few curb cuts are located on Van Ness with the majority of vehicle access at the side and rear of the buildings;
- Variety of scale, however, larger showrooms and auxiliary structures are situated along Van Ness while smaller scale structures are situated along side streets; and
- Verticality of building is emphasized either through ornamentation or uninterrupted vertical piers that terminate at the top floor or cornice level.

In an effort to better understand these features, Page & Turnbull completed a brief site visit to the neighborhood on July 3, 2008, to record the patterns and features that define the district, especially in the immediate vicinity of 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue (please refer to “*Appendix A*” for photographs from this survey). In addition to the character-defining features listed above, general patterns found within the potential boundaries of the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” historic district include:

- **Variety of uses.** While automotive use (both showrooms and auxiliary functions) is the feature that unifies the “Auto Row” historic district, Van Ness Avenue and the surrounding neighborhood feature a wide variety of uses, including commercial or retail, light industrial, and residential. While the non-automotive buildings do not contribute to the automotive theme of the district, many date to the period of reconstruction that followed the 1906 Earthquake and Fire and are architecturally distinguished. The highest concentration of automotive uses appears to be centered on California Street, with a majority of the showrooms located to the south. Further north along Van Ness Avenue, residential uses dominate the streetscape, with the area north of Broadway featuring almost exclusively apartments and mixed-use buildings. Residential uses are also located on the side streets between Franklin and Polk streets. For example, on the 1600 block of Pacific Avenue, only six of the twelve buildings feature automotive uses, while the remainder appear to be large condominiums, mixed-use apartment buildings, and commercial establishments. Some commercial uses are scattered along Van Ness Avenue, but Polk Street serves as the major pedestrian-oriented commercial corridor from Russian Hill to Civic Center.
- **Variety of scale.** As noted in the list of character-defining features, larger showrooms are typically situated along Van Ness Avenue, while smaller structures are situated along side streets (between Franklin and Polk streets). The large and ornate showrooms and newer residential construction located along Van Ness Avenue are commonly four to ten stories in height, with some up to twenty-five stories. Along the side streets, buildings also feature a wide variety of heights and bulks. The majority of side streets feature a combination of one- and two-story garages and automotive repair shops located adjacent to four- to six-story residential buildings, although some streets also have some eight- to ten-story apartments and condominium buildings. For example, on the block containing 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue, heights range from one to nine stories, with a variety of bulks and architectural styles. Additionally, lot widths fronting the district’s side streets typically run from 25 feet to 100 feet, with some running up to 150 feet. The lot containing the project site (APN 0595/013) runs 129 feet along the south side of Pacific Avenue.
- **Variety of architectural styles.** Architectural styles within the “Auto Row” historic district range from the Classical Revival, Twentieth Century Commercial, Renaissance Revival, and Utilitarian styles typically used for the showrooms and auxiliary automotive buildings, to Gothic Revival, Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Edwardian-era, and modern styles. These styles are also commonly found on residential and commercial buildings of various sizes. Many of the buildings and architectural styles found in the area date from the 1910s and 1920s—the heyday of the Van Ness Auto Row (the Depression and World War II took a heavy toll on

the automotive industry, and development along the Van Ness Avenue corridor began to decline after this). However, there is also a significant amount of modern infill construction in the district, adding another layer to the architectural vocabulary of the neighborhood.

- **New construction.** The “Auto Row” historic district has always featured a variety of building types, but numerous infill construction projects have been added to district as the decline in automotive services gave way to more demand for residential and commercial uses. In the 1990s and 2000s, it appears that economic changes and the adoption of the Van Ness Area Plan led to an increase in new construction—especially high-density residential buildings—in and around the “Auto Row” historic district. For example, on the block containing 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue (Block 0595), five buildings were constructed between 1906 and 1915, one was constructed in the 1950s, and the remaining three were constructed in the 1990s. The abundance of new construction in the area has somewhat diminished the integrity of setting of the “Auto Row” historic district. Despite this loss of integrity, many showrooms and other types of historic resources are still extant, and the area is still able to convey its strong associations with San Francisco’s automotive history and development patterns.

#### *Current Historic Status*

1645 and 1661 Pacific Avenue are not specifically listed in the Van Ness Avenue Area Plan as significant buildings or as contributors to the potential California Register-eligible Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” historic district. Page & Turnbull’s April 23, 2008, memorandum determined that neither the demolition of 1645 Pacific Avenue nor the partial demolition of 1661 Pacific Avenue as part of the proposed project would have an impact on the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” historic district. While the proposed project does not appear to have a direct impact on any individual historic resources, the project site is located within the boundaries of the potential historic district, and therefore any new development on the site must be compatible with the historic character of the entire district.

#### *Proposed Project*

The project sponsors propose to erect a six-story, mixed-use building at 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue (see “*Appendix B*” for drawings of the proposed design). The proposed project calls for the demolition of the existing building at 1645 Pacific Avenue, and the removal of the rear portion of the garage at 1661 Pacific Avenue. While some historic fabric at 1661 Pacific Avenue would be lost as part of the proposed project, the retention of the façade, the use of a deep setback as part of the new construction, and the continued use of the building as a garage with an automotive entrance will help preserve the building’s character-defining features.

The proposed project would feature retail spaces on the ground floor, residential units on the upper floors, and an underground garage. The new building would be designed in a contemporary style, but its ornamentation references elements from the Art Nouveau, Art Deco, Classical Revival, and Industrial styles found in the surrounding neighborhood and the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” historic district. At 1645 Pacific Avenue, the proposed design would feature a rusticated base with arched storefront openings, an ornate entrance, punched window openings with divided light windows, a varied roofline, and a simple modillioned cornice. At 1661 Pacific Avenue, the new construction would be clad in brick, with steel-sash industrial-style windows and a simple cornice, and would incorporate the existing garage façade into the design of the ground floor. Materials to be used

include reinforced concrete, brick masonry, cement plaster, metal, and glass, all of which are found in the surrounding historic district. The proposed design also utilizes setbacks and projecting bays to break up the massing of the building, which would help integrate the new construction into the existing streetscape.

As designed, the height, scale, massing, and features of the new construction are well within the range found in the surrounding neighborhood, and are compatible with the architecture of the “Auto Row” historic district. The project would also still allow 1661 Pacific Avenue to convey its association with automotive uses, as well as to complement the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” district.

*Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*

The proposed project should be further evaluated for its effect on the integrity of the character-defining features of the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” district, and an analysis of the project’s compliance with the Standards—specifically Rehabilitation Standard 9—must be viewed in regards to the district as a whole. As requested by the Planning Department, the following analysis applies Standard 9 to the proposed project, which is considered to be infill construction in an existing historic district:

**Rehabilitation Standard 9:** *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and environment.*

As discussed in Page & Turnbull’s April 23, 2008, memorandum, the proposed project does not appear to affect the integrity of the Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” potential historic district. The “Auto Row” district is characterized by an eclectic mix of volumes, heights, and architectural styles, but is unified by the high concentration of automotive uses—ranging from grandiose automobile showrooms to small, simple, utilitarian repair shops and garages. Most buildings in the district also retain the basic form and architectural detailing from their original construction. The new work is designed in a contemporary style to be differentiated from the old, but the height, scale, massing, and features are all compatible with the architecture of the “Auto Row” historic district, as examples of these items already exist within the district. The proposed project therefore would not affect the integrity of the following character-defining features of the “Auto Row” historic district:

- Automotive use: The preservation of the façade, massing, and automotive use of 1661 Pacific Avenue would help the new construction integrate into the neighborhood, and would not destroy the features that link this property to the overall historic district.
- Loft-style concrete structures: The new construction behind the existing façade of 1661 Pacific Avenue features an industrial loft-style design, and resembles the showrooms and warehouses found elsewhere in the district. While the rest of the proposed project is not specifically designed as a loft-style building, its overall size and massing is compatible with the character of the district, especially the nearby residential buildings.
- Construction type and materials: Buildings in the district typically feature masonry or concrete construction and decorative elements, and the rusticated base, masonry accents, and cement plaster cladding of the proposed project would complement the materiality of other buildings in the district.
- Architectural style: According to the Planning Department’s list of character-defining features, buildings in the district are often rendered in simplified Classical or Renaissance



Revival styles. This is especially true of the showroom and other automotive buildings along Van Ness Avenue, but the buildings on the side streets represent a greater variety of styles. There are a number of Art Deco, Art Nouveau, and other exotic revival style apartment buildings from the 1920s within the “Auto Row” district which have much in common stylistically with the proposed project (see “*Appendix A*”). While buildings designed in these styles do not typically contribute to the automotive theme of the district, they do date to the district’s period of significance. Thus, while the proposed design does not specifically reference the styles of the auto showrooms, it is within the range of styles found in the area and would therefore not clash with or detract from the overall character of the district. Additionally, the level of ornamentation varies greatly within the district, and the level of ornamentation found in the proposed design is complementary to that found elsewhere in the neighborhood.

- Ground-floor windows: Contributors to the “Auto Row” historic district typically feature a large proportion of glass to masonry, especially on the ground floor to accommodate automobile display rooms. The large, arched windows for the ground floor retail spaces of the proposed design follow this trend, and would be compatible with other examples within the district.
- Upper-floor windows: As is typical of the “Auto Row” district, the proposed project features punched window openings on the upper floors, with multi-light windows that have mullion patterns similar to those on other buildings in the area. The proposed design also utilizes steel sash, industrial-style windows for the portion of the new construction at 1661 Pacific Avenue, which is a character-defining feature of many of the showrooms and garages elsewhere in the district.
- Scale and height: A wide variety of building scales and heights is one of the character-defining features of the “Auto Row” district. The tallest, most impressive buildings are located on Van Ness Avenue, while the smaller side streets typically house smaller-scale buildings with auxiliary automotive uses. However, taller residential examples and other garages from both the period of significance and later eras are also interspersed on these side streets. The height of the proposed design is well within the range of heights found within the district, even on the side streets, and therefore would not affect this feature of the district. The proposed design also utilizes setbacks and projecting bays to break up the massing and help the new construction integrate into the streetscape and minimize the building’s visual impact on the district.
- Vertical emphasis: The verticality of buildings within the “Auto Row” historic district is typically expressed through ornamentation and/or uninterrupted vertical piers, and the proposed project does not appear to impact this feature. While the proposed design is wider than it is tall due to zoning requirements, the division of the Pacific Avenue façade into bays differentiated by a variety of architectural features minimizes the perception of the building’s bulk and emphasizes verticality. Additionally, the use of ornamentation in the form of a rusticated base and simple cornice, and the use of punched window openings rather than horizontal bands of windows creates architectural interest that further highlights the building’s height.

It should also be noted that the integrity of setting of the district has already been somewhat compromised due to numerous non-automotive infill construction projects from a variety of eras. The insertion of the proposed project—which is well within the range of uses, styles, and heights found in the vicinity—does not appear to further erode the district’s integrity of setting.

As designed, the proposed project therefore appears to comply with Rehabilitation Standard 9.

*Conclusion*

It is the opinion of Page & Turnbull that as designed, the project at 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue is in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and would not impact the Van Ness Avenue "Auto Row" potential historic district. Because of the wide variety of uses, heights, and architectural styles currently found within the "Auto Row" historic district and surrounding neighborhood, the proposed project—which is well within the range of uses, styles, and heights found in this vicinity—would be compatible with the overall character of the area. The integrity of setting of the district has also been somewhat compromised due to numerous non-automotive infill construction projects from a variety of eras, and the insertion of the proposed project within the boundaries of the district therefore does not appear to further erode the district's integrity of setting. The proposed project is designed in a contemporary style to be differentiated from the old, but the height, scale, massing, and features are compatible with the a majority of the character-defining features of the "Auto Row" historic district. Numerous examples of buildings and features that are similar to the proposed design in style, scale, and use can likewise be found throughout the district (see "*Appendix A*"). Additionally, the integration of the character-defining features of 1661 Pacific Avenue into the new project would preserve the building's feeling as an early twentieth century garage and allow it to continue to contribute to the Van Ness Avenue "Auto Row" historic district. Ultimately, the project would preserve the existing character and feeling of the potential historic district, and would not affect the district's overall integrity, ability to convey its historical significance, or eligibility for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

*Appendix A: Photographs, Van Ness Avenue "Auto Row" Historic District*

*Appendix B: Proposed Project at 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue*

*Appendix A*

Photographs of 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue and surrounding Van Ness Avenue “Auto Row” historic district. Page & Turnbull, 3 July 2008.



1645-1661 Pacific Avenue



North side of Jackson Street, between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street. The Medical Arts Building at 2000 Van Ness Avenue (1909) is a significant building within the “Auto Row” district, while the adjacent nine-story residential building at 1650 Jackson Street was constructed in 1998.



North side of Pacific Avenue, between Franklin Street and Van Ness Avenue. On this block, the buildings on the side street are taller than those on Van Ness Avenue, and feature residential uses.



Post Street, between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street. This block features a combination of multi-family residential buildings and single-story automobile repair shops, with extensive use of masonry construction and Classical Revival details.



West side of Van Ness Avenue, between Broadway and Vallejo streets. This block is within the potential boundaries of the “Auto Row” district and is prominently located on Van Ness Avenue, yet features small-scale residential buildings and a variety of architectural styles.



Van Ness Avenue at Sacramento Street. The eclectic mix of heights, uses, and architectural styles found within the “Auto Row” historic district is evident in this view.



Van Ness Avenue at Sutter Street. The juxtaposition of the Renaissance Revival-style building at 1320 Van Ness Avenue (1909) and modern building 1284 Sutter Street (1984) is common throughout the “Auto Row” district.



Gothic Revival-style apartment buildings at 1725-1755 Van Ness Avenue, on the southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Clay Street (1928).



**1500 Bush Street at Van Ness Avenue (1909).** The elaborate metal balconies, brackets, and curvilinear bay windows are echoed by some of the details presented in the proposed design for 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue.



**1725 Washington Street, between Van Ness Avenue and Polk Street (2006).** Example of infill residential construction adjacent to historic apartment buildings. The building is designed in a contemporary style, yet its bulk and features are compatible with the surrounding streetscape.



**New apartment building at southeast corner of Geary and Polk streets (2008) is compatible with the features of the surrounding district.**



**990 Geary Street, at Polk Street (1914). The windows of this large apartment building are similar to those in the proposed design for 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue.**





1845 Franklin Street, at Clay (1926). This Art Nouveau-style apartment building is located on the edge of the potential historic district boundary, but is an excellent example of the type of apartment buildings constructed throughout the city in the 1920s.



Apartment building at 1745 Pacific Avenue (1929). The height, Art Nouveau-inspired style, and level of ornamentation are referenced by the proposed project.



1301 Van Ness Avenue, at Sutter Street (1912). The cornice, windows, and ornament of this building are similar to the proposed design for 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue.



Detail of 1142 Van Ness Avenue, at Post Street (1909). This unique window shape can be found in Art Nouveau, Renaissance Revival, or Craftsman style buildings, and is similar to some of the window shapes of the proposed project.



**Pre-quake apartment building at 1594 Union Street, at Franklin Street (altered). This mixed-use building features curved bay windows similar to those proposed at the project site.**

*Appendix B*

Proposed project at 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue. For additional information about the proposed project, please refer to the City Planning Department Meeting packet entitled "1645 Pacific Avenue" (13 May 2008) prepared by Page & Turnbull.



**Elevation of proposed project's Pacific Avenue façade**



**Sketch of proposed project at 1645-1661 Pacific Avenue**



**View west from Polk Street and Pacific Avenue,  
with massing of proposed project inserted**



**View east from Van Ness Avenue and Pacific Avenue,  
with massing of proposed project inserted**

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Appendix 6:  
SEPTEMBER 2008  
SUBSEQUENT PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION RESPONSE

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# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

## Historic Resource Evaluation Response

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

*MEA Planner:* Brett Bollinger  
*Project Address:* 1645 Pacific Street  
*Block/Lot:* 0595/013  
*Case No.:* 2007.0519E  
*Date of Review:* September 26, 2008  
*Planning Dept. Reviewer:* Tim Frye  
(415) 575-6822 | tim.frye@sfgov.org

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**PROPOSED PROJECT**       Demolition       Alteration

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 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 alteration 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.

### HISTORIC DISTRICT / NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The subject lot 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. 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 a previously identified but undocumented Van Ness Auto Row California Register 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

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

**If Yes; Period of significance: 1906 – 1958 (Page & Turnbull report identifies the end date for the period of significance as 1970s, however, staff does not have enough information to concur with this date).**

This evaluation has been amended based on two Page & Turnbull Memorandums dated April 28, 2008 and July 14, 2008.

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, 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 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. Based on the supplied information from McGrew Architecture and Page & Turbull, staff concurs that 1645 Pacific Avenue

does not appear to possess any of the outstanding qualities or characteristics that would identify it as eligible for listing in the California Register. While there is evidence of the original massing of the structure, due to several major alterations and additions, the building does not feature sufficient historic integrity to be a contributor to the eligible Van Ness Auto Row historic district in the area. Further, the alterations to the site have not gained significance in their own right and in themselves do not raise the building to a level of significance.

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 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. This conversion to an automobile use is within the preliminarily identified period of significance of the eligible Van Ness Auto Row historic district.

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 conflagration. 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.

Based on the supplied information by McGrew Architecture, Page & Turnbull, and preservation staff analysis, 1661 Pacific Avenue has been determined to be eligible under Criteria 1 and 3 as a contributor to the previously identified but undocumented Van Ness Auto Row historic district. The 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. Development followed the typical pattern for auto uses, with the large showroom buildings long 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. 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.

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 consistent with the historic pattern of development of the Van Ness Auto Row historic district. The site itself follows this pattern in that 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. Further, the Pacific Avenue façade is indicative of the type of commercial building and vernacular style that was built in the years immediately following the 1906 earthquake and fire. 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.

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:

<b>Location:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	<b>Setting:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks
<b>Association:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks	<b>Feeling:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks
<b>Design:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks	<b>Materials:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks
<b>Workmanship:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks			

1661 Pacific Avenue:

<b>Location:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	<b>Setting:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
<b>Association:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	<b>Feeling:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
<b>Design:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	<b>Materials:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
<b>Workmanship:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks			

Notes: Despite some alterations over its life, 1661 Pacific Avenue retains a high degree of integrity from the period of significance. Although it should be noted that there are no exact records of 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, which is within the period of significance. 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 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.

---

**3. Determination whether the property is an "historical resource" for purposes of CEQA**

1645 Pacific

No Resource Present (*Go to 6. below*)

Historical Resource Present (*Continue to 4.*)

1661 Pacific

No Resource Present (*Go to 6. below*)

Historical Resource Present (*Continue to 4.*)

---

**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.

Preservation staff concurs with the Page & Turnbull memorandum dated April 28, 2008 that the proposed work related to 1661 Pacific Avenue meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. and shall not have a significant adverse impact upon the subject building or the Van Ness Auto Row District. Based on that memo it is important to note that the structural system of the subject building has been significantly compromised. The historic rear wall was previously removed and replaced with CMU; the wall separating 1661 Pacific and 1645 Pacific is a party wall that structurally belongs to 1645 Pacific; and the exterior wall between the subject building and its opposite neighbor appears to be wood frame construction that is likely original to the building. Given this information and documentation, staff has determined that the most important character-defining features to be retained are the front façade and the historic roofline.

The proposed project shall respect the historic roofline of the subject property in that the addition shall be set back from the front façade 15-feet. The Department encourages a greater setback but believes that as proposed allows the subject building to convey its historic significance.

Considering the poor structural integrity of the building and the amount of intervention required to rehabilitate this structure, staff believes that the removal of the remaining structural elements is acceptable in this case without creating a significant adverse impact upon the resource. It is also important to note that this determination refers to the specific conditions surrounding the subject property and is not intended to set precedent for any other cases.

- The project is NOT consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards; however the project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of the resource such that the significance of the resource would be materially impaired. *(Continue to 5. if the project is an alteration)*
- 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)*

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**5. Character-defining features of the building to be retained or respected in order to be consistent with the Standards and/or avoid a significant adverse effect by the project, presently or cumulatively. Please recommend conditions of approval that may be desirable to avoid or reduce any adverse effects.**

The character-defining features of 1661 Pacific Avenue include all exterior elevations, including rooflines, visible from the public rights-of-way.

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**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

Notes: Staff concurs with the Page & Turnbull memorandum dated July 14, 2008. While the Van Ness Auto Row historic district boundaries are undocumented, enough information exists to identify a preliminary list of character-defining features for the area. These features include,

- Loft-like concrete structures to accommodate ample space for showrooms, repair bays, and parts storage;
- All buildings are clad in masonry or are of concrete construction – many feature decorative elements in terracotta, cast stone, or other masonry trim;
- Buildings are often rendered in simplified Classical or Renaissance Revival styles. Building facades incorporate ornament in varying degrees, and often employ classically-inspired detailing;
- A very large proportion of glass-to-masonry, particularly on the lower levels where automobile display rooms were located;

- Window openings are punched and while first- and second-floors traditionally feature large expanses of glass in wide showroom openings, windows on upper floors are traditionally grouped or ganged together in similarly large openings;
- Very few curb cuts are located on Van Ness with the majority of vehicle access at the side and rear of the buildings;
- Variety of scale, however, larger showrooms and auxiliary structures are situated along Van Ness while smaller scale structures are situated along side streets; and
- Verticality of building is emphasized either through ornamentation or uninterrupted vertical piers that terminate at the top floor or cornice level.

In sum, staff concurs that the project at 1645 Pacific Avenue is compatible with the district in terms of its height, scale, massing, fenestration pattern, and other features. Its design reflects the varied architectural styles of the district and shall not have a significant adverse impact upon the Van Ness Auto Row District.

**PRESERVATION COORDINATOR REVIEW**

Signature:   
Mark Luellen, *Preservation Coordinator*

Date: 9.30.08

cc: Sonya Banks, *Recording Secretary*, Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board  
Vimaliza Byrd / Historic Resource Impact Review File

TF: G:\PROJECTS\HRER2008\Pacific\_1645\_2007.0519E.doc

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Appendix 7:

**JUNE 2010 PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
VAN NESS AUTO ROW  
SUPPORT STRUCTURES SURVEY**

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# VAN NESS AUTO ROW SUPPORT STRUCTURES

A Survey of Automobile-Related Buildings  
along the Van Ness Avenue Corridor



*Interior of Don Lee's Cadillac showroom, 1000 Van Ness Avenue*

*by*

William Kostura, Architectural Historian  
P. O. Box 60211  
Palo Alto, CA 94306

*for*

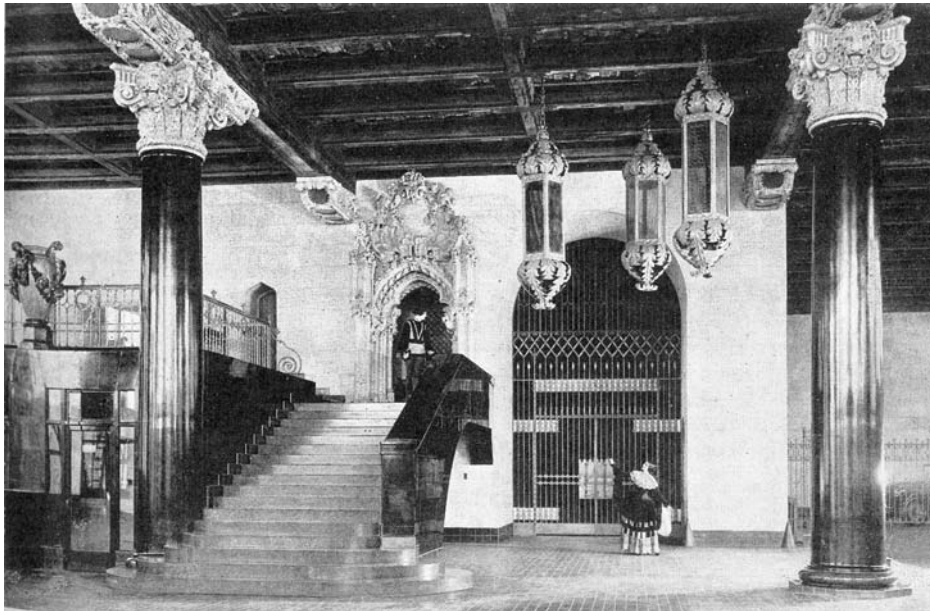
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2010

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Interior of Earle C. Anthony's Packard showroom, 901 Van Ness Avenue, built in 1926-1926 and designed by Bernard Maybeck and Powers & Ahnden, associated architects.

## **I. INTRODUCTION TO THIS SURVEY**

### Theme of survey

This report is an architectural survey of buildings along the Van Ness Avenue corridor that have a history related to the automobile industry in San Francisco. It has been commissioned by San Francisco's Department of City Planning as part of its ongoing effort to survey historic buildings in the city.

The Van Ness Avenue corridor has been the center of San Francisco's automobile industry since before the earthquake and fire of 1906, and was known as the city's "Auto Row" from the 1910s through the 1980s. The building types that represent this industry include auto showrooms; public garages; auto repair shops; auto supplies stores; shops that offered specialized services such as tire and battery sales, auto tops and trimming, auto painting, and electrical systems servicing; and multiple-use buildings that held three or more of the above kinds of businesses at a given time.

Almost all of San Francisco's older auto showrooms can be found within the study area of this report, and a disproportionately large number of the other building types can be also.

### Goals of this survey

Many of the buildings in this survey date to the first decades of the history of the automobile industry in San Francisco. No such buildings from the pre-1906 period survive, but a large number from 1909 through the 1920s survive, and these represent the early history of the automobile in this city. This survey seeks to identify the buildings that best represent various aspects of that history.

The first step of this survey has been to identify all of the surviving buildings of each type mentioned above (e.g., auto showrooms, public garages, auto repair shops, auto supplies stores, etc.) that still stand in the study area, and to research their histories. This survey then will identify: the oldest examples of each type, the buildings that had the greatest longevity of such uses, those with the most distinguished architecture, and those that have the highest level of integrity. Other considerations such as the capacity or size of each building, a building's association with important businesses, and a building's association with important persons (usually, the proprietors of auto-related businesses), are also noted.

Once these buildings have been so identified, they will be evaluated for possible historic significance according to the California Register of Historical Resources. Those that are eligible for the California Register are those that have been found to best represent important aspects of the automobile industry in the study area.

On a few occasions, buildings in the study area also relate to themes in areas other than automobile-related history. Buildings may be evaluated for these themes as well.

### Boundaries of the study area, and time period studied

The boundaries of the study area are Pacific Avenue on the north (including buildings on the north side of that street), Larkin Street on the east (including buildings on the east side of, or very close to, Larkin), Gough Street on the west, and Market Street on the south; plus, in the South-of-Market area, the area bounded by Market, the north side of Mission, Eleventh, and Gough.

The time period being studied is from the beginning of the automobile industry in San Francisco, ca. 1900, through 1964, the latter being a cut-off date assigned by the Department of City Planning.<sup>1</sup> As far as extant buildings are concerned, the oldest dates to 1909, and the latest dates to 1947. The automobile-related history of all buildings in the survey has been studied through 1964.

### Evaluation

As mentioned above, all buildings in the survey are evaluated for possible historic significance according to the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources. The forms used for these evaluations are State of California Department of Parks and Recreation 523 forms, usually referred to as DPR 523 forms. Status codes have been entered onto these forms that take into account the buildings' apparent eligibility or non-eligibility for the California Register and, in one case, its listing on the National Register. Two buildings in this survey are official San Francisco city landmarks, and these designations have also been noted.

The findings in this study are preliminary. After its completion, this study will be submitted to San Francisco's Historic Preservation Commission for review and possible ratification.

## **II. SYNTHESIS OF INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THIS SURVEY**

### Summary of findings

112 buildings in the study area of this report were formally evaluated on DPR 523 forms. In the course of this study, one potential California Register historic district was found to exist; it contains five buildings, all of them contributors to the district. Another 59 buildings in the study area appear to be individually eligible for the California Register. Thus, a total of 64 buildings in this survey appear to be eligible for the California Register, either individually or as contributors to a historic district. 47 buildings do not appear to be eligible for the California Register, either individually or as part of a district. The eligibility of one building in the survey remains uncertain pending the creation of a historic context statement on an aspect of San Francisco history other than the automotive industry.

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<sup>1</sup> 1964 was selected as a cut-off date because it is 45 years before this survey was conducted.

## Field and research methods

### *Identification of auto-related buildings*

The first step was to identify those buildings that have a substantial automobile-related history. The most useful source toward this end was four sets of Sanborn insurance maps, which labeled the uses of buildings. The available sets of Sanborn maps include:

1913, at the San Francisco History Center, Main Library (SFPL),  
1928-1936, at the California Historical Society (CHS),  
1948-1951, at SFPL, and  
1964, at CHS.

The buildings that the Sanborn maps labeled as having automotive uses were noted. Next, a site survey was conducted to note which of these buildings still stand with good or better integrity, which buildings have been thoroughly altered in appearance, and which have been demolished. Several more automobile-related buildings were discovered in the course of this site survey.

In all, over 150 buildings in the study area were found that have an automobile-related history. Roughly forty of these buildings were omitted from the survey because their integrity was very poor, or because their auto-related history was slight. The 112 buildings that were evaluated are those that had the highest potential for eligibility based on their auto-related history.

### *Subsequent site survey*

A more careful site survey was performed later, in order to note the materials, compositions, and details of building facades, to note alterations, and to take photographs. Most of this survey was conducted in June 2009, although many further visits were made in later months. In general, attention was given only to the exterior of a building. The interiors of buildings were not considered, except for those aspects that could readily be viewed from the sidewalk.

### *Archival research*

Once identified, the histories of buildings were researched using archival sources. Building permits available at the Department of Building Inspection documented the dates of construction, the first owners, the architects, the contractors, the structural type, and often alterations of buildings. Architectural periodicals also revealed some of this information; most useful was *Building and Industrial News* (later, *Building and Engineering News*). Early photographs of some buildings were found in *Architect and Engineer*.



Many more historical photographs were available from the SFPL. Most are available at low resolution from the library's website. Assessor's photographs of the late 1940s to early 1960s are also available at the library, though not on-line. Many photographs were taken by the Department of City Planning for its 1976 survey of historic buildings and for its Van Ness Avenue Plan of the 1980s. Finally, a photo montage of dozens of auto showrooms was published in the Christmas 1913 issue of the *San Francisco Newsletter* (available at CHS). These historic photos were carefully compared with extant buildings in order to determine what alterations have been made to the buildings.

The most useful source for the names of occupants of buildings was the Crocker-Langley City Directory for San Francisco (later known as Polk's Crocker-Langley). By scanning the classified section of various years under the headings Automobiles, Automobile Dealers, Garages, Automobile Garages, Automobile Repair, Automobile Supplies, and so forth, one can find the occupants of these buildings. Because addresses have sometimes changed, it was important to compare the addresses given in city directories with the addresses of buildings given in the Sanborn maps. Cross-directories by address for intermittent years (1927, 1933, 1940, and 1946) and for all years after 1953 are available at the SFPL and CHS, and were also very useful. Finally, the yellow pages of PT&T telephone books from the 1930s onward were also useful, and sometimes yielded more information than the Polk's Crocker-Langley directories did. Once occupants were identified for a cross-section of years, further city directory and yellow pages research was performed to fill the gaps, and to create a nearly complete list of occupants for each building through 1964.

The daily newspapers were also a rich source of information. Newspaper clippings regarding many buildings in the study area are available at the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage. The *San Francisco Chronicle* from 1880 through 1922 has now been scanned and indexed, and can be viewed online through the ProQuest website (accessible through the SFPL website). The *San Francisco Call* has also been scanned and indexed, and is available through two websites.

Finally, background information on the automobile industry and on automobile and tire brands was gleaned from entries in Wikipedia. In a few instances minor discrepancies were found among various Wikipedia entries. Due to time constraints it was not possible to check this information against other sources.

All of the above information, gathered through archival sources and site surveys, was considered and collated for the historic context statement presented below.

Creation of hierarchies: business types, dates of use, longevity, integrity

In order to judge which buildings have significance under the criteria of the California Register, these buildings must be compared against each other, and must also be looked at in the context of the history of the automobile industry in San Francisco.

Toward that end, lists were made of all auto-related business types in the study area, and of every building that is an example of that type. Buildings of each type (e.g., auto showroom, public garage, auto repair shop, etc.) were compared to each other in terms of these qualities:

- early date of this use,
- longevity of this use,
- capacity, and
- degree of integrity,

with the idea that older examples are usually more important than later ones; buildings that had a certain use for many years are usually more important than those that had such use only briefly; buildings that had a great capacity were usually more important than small buildings; and buildings with high integrity can convey such importance more clearly than highly altered buildings can.

The above statements may seem obvious, but in practice judging the most important examples of buildings was not always easy. Sometimes the oldest examples of a building type are also the smallest examples. Older examples have usually undergone more alterations than later ones have. Very often, buildings underwent changes of use over the years. A building built as a public garage often became an auto repair shop in later years, and a showroom for new automobiles might have later become a used car salesroom. Many buildings held two or more uses simultaneously; a public garage and an auto repair shop (with each use on a different floor) is the most common example of this pattern. In general, the aim was to identify the oldest, longest-term, largest, and most intact examples of each building type.

Hierarchies for different patterns of history were established. These hierarchies will help to establish the relative importance of a given building (compared to other buildings) and aid in evaluating that building according to California Register criteria.

#### *Hierarchies of building and business types*

Regarding building types, the most important is:

- Automobile showrooms selling major brands of new automobiles. This includes brands that were popular at the time, but that are now little-remembered. The auto showroom was the building type that was most concentrated in the study area, and was the one that served as a magnet for all of the other building types (listed below). Auto showrooms selling major brands also tended to be the most imposing, or showy, in their general appearance.

The second most important group of buildings types include:

- Public garages. Several services that were vital to automobile owners were offered in these buildings before World War II. They also tended to be imposing in appearance, although not as much so as auto showrooms.
- Multiple-use buildings. These buildings were constructed to hold three or more auto-related businesses simultaneously. Uses found in these buildings included auto showrooms, garages, auto repair shops, auto painting shops, and other specialized services. Only a few buildings of this type stand in the study area.
- An automobile engineering college. At this college (Heald's), students learned to design and repair automobiles, among other skills. There is only one example of this building type left standing in the study area.

The next most important group of buildings types are:

- General auto repair shops. These shops performed major repairs on automobiles.
- Auto accessories, parts, and supplies stores.
- Tire shops selling well-known national brands. These buildings sometimes had a large capacity and were conspicuous features of the study area.
- Auto showrooms selling brands that were considered minor or obscure at the time.

Less important buildings types include:

- Specialized services shops such as body building and repair shops, machinists of auto parts, auto painting, auto tops and trimmings, springs, brakes, batteries, radiators, fenders, wheel aligning, and tires of minor or unknown brands.
- Used car salesrooms.

Even examples of the above two types can possess historic significance if they are early examples with good or high integrity, and if these uses were present for many years in a building's history.

A building or business type with minimal importance is:

- Auto finance and insurance offices.

### *Hierarchies of date*

The oldest examples of a building type, or of an automotive use, are more important than later ones because they represent the origins of the industry. A hierarchy has been established for this study, as follows:

- Early date of a given use or building type: 1909-1919.
- Moderately early date of a given use or building type: 1920s
- Moderately late date of a given use or building type: 1930s
- Late date of a given use or building type: 1940s-1960s

This hierarchy by decades is not as arbitrary as it may seem. Many auto buildings in the study area were constructed in the year 1920. It seems to have been a peak year of auto-related construction, and is thus a useful dividing line between “early” and “moderately early.” The onset of the Great Depression is another useful dividing line.

These periods also correspond to the physical aspects of automobiles. The 1910s is termed by some auto historians the “brass age,” because of the brass fittings used in automobile construction then. Autos from the 1920s are sometimes considered to belong to the “antique” period, those from the 1930s to the “vintage” period, and those from the 1940s-1950s the “classic” period.

Although only a few buildings in the survey were built in the 1930s, and only one was built after that decade, it is worth distinguishing between the 1930s and 1940s. Most buildings in the survey continued to have automobile uses into the 1940s-1960s, and for this reason, a 1930s date of auto use should be considered as “moderately late,” and an auto-related use during the 1940s-1960s would be “late.”

#### *Hierarchies of longevity*

Buildings that held an automobile-related use for many years will naturally be more important examples of this building or business type than one that held such use for only a few years. A hierarchy has, therefore, also been established for longevity of use. This hierarchy is considered for both overall auto-related use, and for specific uses (such as public garages or auto repair). The years that buildings had these uses are counted only through 1964, the end year of the period being studied.

Excellent longevity of a certain use: 30 years or longer

Good longevity of a certain use: 20 to 29 years

Moderate longevity of a certain use: 10 to 19 years

Fair longevity of a certain use: seven to nine years

Brief longevity of a certain use: one to six years.

In general, a building should have at least ten years of total auto-related use (through 1964) to be considered a solid example of an auto-related building; more is preferable.

#### *Other hierarchies*

Business proprietors who worked in the automotive industry in San Francisco beginning at an early date, and continued to do so for many years, may be considered to have been important persons in their field. They were pioneers in the city’s auto industry and were

active in it as the field underwent numerous changes. Buildings that are large in their area, and that had a great capacity, are usually more important than buildings that had a smaller capacity and thus served fewer owners of automobiles. Finally, and very importantly, buildings that have higher integrity are better able to evoke their history than do buildings with lower integrity.

### *Summation*

The purpose of establishing these hierarchies is to clarify which buildings in the study area best evoke the history of the automobile industry, and to aid us in evaluating them according to California Register criteria. Some aspects of automotive history are more important than others, and some buildings exemplify these aspects better than others do. For example: because auto showrooms, public garages, and multi-use buildings are so important as building types, examples with only fair integrity might still be considered significant, whereas used car salesrooms or fender repair shops with the same level of integrity would not be. Similarly, an auto repair shop that is one of the oldest in the study area, and that has excellent longevity in this use, might be considered significant even though its integrity is only fair, whereas a later example with the same level of integrity would not be.

The methodology employed in this study, then, is to consider all of the factors outlined above in an attempt to identify those buildings which best illustrate the history of the automobile industry in the study area.

### Historical overview

#### *Introduction*

Van Ness Avenue, from its beginning at Market Street to just north of Pacific Avenue, was the premier auto showroom district in San Francisco from shortly after the earthquake and fire of 1906 until the 1980s. Although only a few active auto dealerships remain on the avenue, many buildings that were built as auto showrooms and that have undergone adaptive reuse survive to the present day. In addition, many early garages, auto repair shops, and other automotive support buildings still stand within a two-block radius of Van Ness. This corridor, about 22 blocks in length and slightly over three blocks in width, contains by far the largest concentration of auto-related buildings in San Francisco.

Although many of these buildings now have other uses, their auto-related origins are often evident from their architectural appearance. The larger auto showrooms typically have wide expanses of glass in the lower and upper stories, a monumental scale, and sometimes lavish ornamentation to advertise their products. Garages used for automobile storage and auto repair shops possess wide portals for auto entrance and egress, and often the width of these entrance bays is repeated across the entire façade. Showrooms and garages are usually built of reinforced concrete, a material that facilitated large window areas and the storage of autos on upper stories. The distinctive appearance of these

buildings is clearly derived from their original uses, and thus one can find a close tie between the history and the architecture of these buildings.

These buildings proved useful as auto showrooms, garages, and repair shops for many decades. Although over 90% were built during the period 1909-1929 (and nearly 100% by 1937), dozens of these buildings continued to serve these uses into the 1980s. After 1909, it was almost never economical to tear down an existing automotive building in order to replace it with a newer one for autos, regardless of changing technologies, new styles, and a growing population. The fact that most were built of reinforced concrete, could support great weight, and were rated as “fireproof” gave these buildings a timeless quality as far as their usefulness for the auto industry was concerned. A few of these buildings maintain their original use almost 100 years after they were constructed.

At least 250, and probably closer to 300, auto-related buildings were built within the study area between 1906 and 1938. A large number of these have been demolished since the 1960s, mostly for residential and office buildings, and others have been heavily altered, but over 100 still stand and retain most of their architectural integrity.

#### *Van Ness Avenue before 1906*

Van Ness Avenue was surveyed as a city street during 1855-1856 by John T. Hoff, the City Surveyor, as part of his survey of the Western Addition. The avenue, along with other streets, cut through existing pre-emption claims such as the Hayes and Beideman tracts<sup>2</sup>. Once these land claims were confirmed by the Van Ness Ordinance of 1855, and the streets and blocks of the Western Addition were surveyed by Hoff, the land could be sold in small lots, usually to builders of houses.

Van Ness Avenue was platted wider than any of the other north-south streets in the city. The reason for this is obscure, but it seems likely that Hoff intended for Van Ness to become an important boulevard because it is relatively flat, passing as it does between Nob and Russian Hills to the east and Pacific Heights to the west.

A few decades would pass before Van Ness Avenue reached its potential as a boulevard. Home-seekers began to build along Van Ness in noticeable numbers during the 1860s, the city beautified the avenue with tree plantings in 1876, and many “fine residences” were built there during the 1870s-1890s. A few of these were palatial in scale. Several institutions located on Van Ness during the period 1864-1891, including churches (St. Brigid’s, First Presbyterian, St. Luke’s Episcopal, and St. Mary’s), a men’s club (Concordia-Argonaut) and a membership library (Mercantile). In the 1890s several residence hotels of some distinction were also built on the avenue. Some of these contained ground floor shops and offices, and thus Van Ness Avenue began to take on a slightly commercial character.

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<sup>2</sup> Van Ness Avenue between Fell and McAllister, passed through the eastern end of the Hayes Tract. Van Ness between McAllister and Bush passed through the Beideman Tract. The next nine blocks of Van Ness, between Bush and Vallejo, passed through pre-emption claims that remain unknown. North of Vallejo Street, Van Ness Avenue passed through the Laguna Survey and the Rickett’s Claim.



Looking south along Van Ness from Sutter Street, some time between 1901 and 1906. At left is St. Dunstan's Hotel for bachelors, built in 1901. The large building one block to its south, with the tower, is the Concordia-Argonaut Club. Across the avenue is the tower of St. Mary's Cathedral.

To summarize, Van Ness Avenue at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was filled with fine residences (mainly north of Sutter Street), churches and other institutions, hotels (mainly between Sutter and Ellis), and rowhouses (especially in the more southerly blocks). The hotels portended an eventual commercialization of the Avenue, a process that was greatly speeded up by the earthquake and fire of 1906.

The earthquake and fire of 1906 destroyed most of the buildings on Van Ness. Every building on the east side of Van Ness south of Filbert Street was dynamited in order to create a fire break. In addition, fires also destroyed the west side of Van Ness between Sutter and Clay (a stretch of four blocks) and the west side of Van Ness south of Golden Gate Avenue (a stretch of six blocks). Most of the buildings on the west side of Van Ness and south of Broadway that survived the fire were destroyed at an early date, usually to make room for automobile showrooms and other commercial buildings.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Beginnings of an Auto Row: Golden Gate Avenue before 1906*

Meanwhile, an automobile industry was beginning to emerge in San Francisco along Golden Gate Avenue near Van Ness.

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<sup>3</sup> The only pre-1906 survivors south of Broadway are portions of St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church; and the first story of the Martinet Hotel, at the southwest corner of Geary and Van Ness, now known as Tommy's Joynt. A few post-1906 buildings recall their 19<sup>th</sup> century predecessors on the same sites: namely, the Richelieu Hotel, the Concordia-Argonaut Club, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and the First Presbyterian Church ("Old First").

A machinist named John Albert Meyer was the first person to build an automobile in San Francisco, in his Noe Valley house in 1896.<sup>4</sup> In 1898 there were still fewer than half a dozen autos in the city, according to Frederick A. Marriott, writing at the end of 1903. In 1900 there were 25 autos in the city, he said, but by 1903 there were over 500.<sup>5</sup> Suddenly, autos had become a common sight in San Francisco.

San Francisco city directories first listed “Automobiles” in its classified section in 1900, when there were two sellers of the vehicles. The next year, in 1901, there were nine auto dealers, of which four were in or very near the study area of this report.<sup>6</sup> In 1902 there were twelve auto dealers in the city, and in 1905 there were 26. In the latter year about half of the dealers were located in the area adjacent to and immediately west of City Hall (then bounded by McAllister, Larkin, and City Hall Avenue); and one street in that area, Golden Gate Avenue, was home to four auto dealers. Those dealers were the seed for San Francisco’s first auto row.

R. R. l’Hommedieu chronicled the rise of automobile dealerships in San Francisco in his 1913 article, “The Evolution of Auto Row.”<sup>7</sup> He said that auto dealers first gravitated to Golden Gate Avenue in 1905 because it was the preferred route from downtown to Golden Gate Park, and was thus a good street to be on if you wanted to catch the eye of “those who were in a position to buy automobiles,” i.e., carriage owners who worked downtown.

A few automobile dealers actually opened on Golden Gate Avenue before 1905. The first – and also the first on Van Ness Avenue – was the Mobile Company of America, which leased the first story and basement of the struggling Mercantile Library at the northeast corner of Golden Gate and Van Ness during 1902-1903. In 1904 the building was remodeled for two new auto dealerships<sup>8</sup>, those of Benjamin B. Stanley, with an address of 596 Golden Gate, and the Middleton Motor Car Company, at 606 Van Ness. Stanley had formerly been a salesman. William Middleton, age 23 in 1904, was backed by his father, a lumber dealer, and sold Columbia Motor Cars.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This car still exists, and is on display at the Oakland Museum.

<sup>5</sup> F. A. Marriott, “The Automobile,” *San Francisco Newsletter*, Christmas Number, 1903 (at California Historical Society).

<sup>6</sup> One, the Sunset Automobile Company, at 1814 Market Street, near Van Ness, was managed by Dorville Libby, Jr., who later co-owned an auto repair shop at 1415 Van Ness (extant). The others included Locomobile of the Pacific, at 1255 Market, between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>; the California Automobile Co., at 346 McAllister; and the California Auto-Traction Co., at 110 McAllister. During 1903-1906 Sunset shared its space at 1814 Market with William L. Hughson, whose Holle Automobile Company was the first dealer of Ford autos in San Francisco, and apparently in the world.

<sup>7</sup> In the *San Francisco Newsletter*, Christmas Number, 1913. At CHS.

<sup>8</sup> *Edward’s Abstracts from Records*, February 24, 1904.

<sup>9</sup> During the three-day fire of 1906 Middleton and his employees gathered 22 automobiles from his showroom and from recent customers and drove fire department officials around in the fulfillment of their duties, including dynamiting the east side of Van Ness Avenue. Reportedly, he so impressed the city that it later purchased 100 autos from him. After the fire Middleton reopened at 550 Golden Gate Avenue. He remained in business until 1911, then briefly became an auto salesman for H. O. Harrison. Sources: Bill Middleton, letter dates Nov. 20, 1952, at CHS. Junior League file for 1960 Jones Street, at the S.F. History Center, Main Library.





Mercantile Library, northeast corner of Van Ness and McAllister, built 1890-1891. Its first floor and basement became devoted to auto showrooms during 1902-1906.

The eastern and western boundaries of the emerging auto row on Golden Gate Avenue were defined in 1903, when two new auto dealers moved to the avenue. At the eastern end was the National Automobile Company, which sold Rambler, Knox, and Haynes-Apperson autos at 134-148 Golden Gate Avenue. At the western end was the Pioneer Automobile Company, at 901-925 Golden Gate Avenue, corner of Octavia, opposite Jefferson Square. Pioneer sold Winton, Olds, and Locomobile autos in 1903; and Winton, Olds, and Stevens-Duryea in 1905.<sup>10</sup>

For the most part, auto dealers before 1906 opened for business in small storefronts within larger buildings. They probably had a small showroom at the front of the store and a small repair shop in the rear. There is no record of how they got their automobiles into these small spaces. By contrast, at least two buildings on Golden Gate Avenue were built specifically for automobile use before 1906. Both were wood-frame in construction. The first was an auto showroom built at the beginning of 1904 at the northeast corner of Golden Gate and Gough, to designs by the Reid Brothers, architects, for the Mobile Carriage Company, which sold Pierce-Arrow cars.<sup>11</sup> The second was built in 1905 at the northwest corner of Golden Gate and Van Ness for the Auto Livery Company, which seems to have sold cars and served as a garage.<sup>12</sup> Both buildings survived the earthquake and fire of 1906 but have since been demolished.

<sup>10</sup> The Pioneer Automobile Company remained at this location until 1909, then moved two blocks to the east, to 724 Golden Gate. In about 1911 it moved again, to 519-529 Van Ness Avenue, where it continued in business for a few years.

<sup>11</sup> *Edwards Abstracts from Records*, January 9, 1904, "Builders' Contracts". The Mobile Carriage Co. remained here through 1908. Its relationship to the earlier Mobile Company of America is unknown.

<sup>12</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 1, 1905, p. 16, col. 6, "Builders' Contracts"

*The first Auto Row: Golden Gate Avenue after 1906*

After the earthquake and fire Golden Gate Avenue was quickly rebuilt with one-story wood-framed commercial buildings. In a continuance of the pattern begun before 1906, many of these were devoted to small auto showrooms, and Golden Gate Avenue became the primary location for auto dealers in the city. In 1907 there were 65 auto dealers in the city, and 32 of them were on Golden Gate Avenue between Leavenworth and Gough.

These wood-framed buildings did not last long. Six of them burned in 1907, when a man in the Howard Automobile Company's building on Golden Gate near Larkin was filling the tank of his car with oil, and a cigarette fell from his lips. An employee and a policeman were both hurt trying to remove valuable autos from the burning building. A building containing the Standard Motor Car Company's Ford storefront, a garage, the Fly Trap restaurant, and several other businesses burned in 1908, when a fire started in the restaurant.

The rest of these wooden buildings were demolished within a few years and replaced by more permanent brick buildings of one to three stories in height, usually with classically-derived ornament. Although they were intended to be attractive, they were, nevertheless, essentially utilitarian in appearance. They did not receive the level of architectural treatment that fine clothing or jewelry shops in the city's fashionable shopping districts received. Most of the automobiles that were sold in these buildings were themselves fairly primitive, for few true luxury automobiles were made in these early years. There was, then, some correspondence between the architecture of these first auto showrooms and the autos that were sold in them.

The number of auto dealers on Golden Gate held steady through 1910, and at least one new auto salesroom was built on the avenue as late as 1911. Already, however, Van Ness Avenue was in the process of supplanting Golden Gate Avenue as the city's auto row. The simple fact that Van Ness was wider, and thus afforded passers-by better views of the showroom display windows, gave it an advantage over Golden Gate. In addition, lots or parcels of land were usually larger on upper Van Ness, and thus the difficulty of assembling lots for construction of larger buildings – a necessity by 1911 – was avoided there.

Numerous automobile support businesses were also located on Golden Gate Avenue, between Hyde and Gough, amid the auto showrooms. These included auto repair shops, automobile supplies stores, tire shops, automobile tops and trimmings shops, and garages. There were seven such businesses along this stretch of Golden Gate Avenue in 1908, and seventeen in 1910. After that year, as mentioned above, the more important automobile dealers increasingly chose to locate on Van Ness Avenue, and Golden Gate Avenue became devoted to smaller automobile dealers and support businesses. Over thirty of these support businesses could be found on Golden Gate Avenue in 1914.

For the period from 1906 through the 1910s at least 46 buildings on Golden Gate Avenue between Hyde and Gough were devoted mostly or entirely to automobile-related businesses. About thirty of these buildings were on the 400 and 500 blocks (between Larkin and Van Ness); next in importance was the 600 block, with nine such buildings; while the 300 and 700 blocks were of least importance. These five blocks continued to be devoted to intensive automobile support into the 1950s. In that decade, however, the expansion of the San Francisco Civic Center with new state and federal buildings displaced numerous auto-related buildings. More demolitions followed in later decades.



Looking east on Golden Gate Avenue from Van Ness in 1913. To the right is the building now numbered 550-590 Van Ness, then occupied by William L. Hughson's Standard Motor Car Co.

Today, only one of the early auto showrooms on Golden Gate Avenue still stands with good integrity. That is 550-590 Van Ness Avenue, at the southeast corner of Golden Gate Avenue. It was built in 1908-1909 to designs by Frederick H. Meyer. Its original address was 583 Golden Gate, which suggests that it was considered at the time to be part of the Golden Gate Avenue auto row, rather than as part of a future row along Van Ness. All of its window and door openings have been altered with new sash and frames, but the exterior brick walls and the cornice are essentially unchanged. Several other Golden Gate Avenue auto buildings still stand, but they have been completely altered in appearance. The most notable of these was 500 Golden Gate (built in 1910).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> East of Hyde Street, one early garage still stands, at 64 Golden Gate Avenue, rather outside the study area of this report. It was built in 1910 to designs by Crim and Scott for the Auto Service Company.

*Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco's temporary downtown, 1906-1908*

After the fires of April 18-21, 1906 were extinguished, Van Ness Avenue became largely commercial in its character. The east side of the street had been cleared by dynamite, and ten blocks on the west side of the street had burned. These blocks were quickly built up with commercial buildings, and surviving mansions on the west side of Van Ness were converted into shops as well, sometimes with low, wood-frame storefronts attached to the fronts. Thus, Van Ness Avenue became a temporary downtown during the period that the real downtown rebuilt.<sup>14</sup> Major dry goods and department stores such as the White House, the City of Paris, the Emporium, Davis-Schonwasser, D. Samuel's Lace House, and Newman and Levison; Roos Bros. men's clothing; Andrews' Diamond Palace and Shreve's (among other jewelry shops); the Anglo-Californian Bank and the Bank of California; Paul Elder and A. M. Robertson's book shops; stationers; restaurants; tailors and milliners were some of the businesses that located here.



The City of Paris' store in a former mansion and temporary storefront at the southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Washington Street, 1906. From an old post card.

Today, only one of these “temporary” commercial buildings still stands on Van Ness Avenue. That is 1415 Van Ness, which was built in 1906 for Roos Brothers, clothiers. It later became an auto repair shop and then an auto showroom. Another small, wood-framed building of 1906, intended at the time to be temporary, survives at 1545 Pine Street, just east of Van Ness. It was originally a restaurant, and was later devoted to automobile-related uses.

<sup>14</sup> Fillmore Street, already devoted to retail, also became a city-wide shopping street during these years.



1415 Van Ness Avenue, built in 1906 as a temporary store for Roos Brothers. This building was subsequently devoted to auto use, including the auto repair shop of Eugene S. Miner (1910-1916), new auto sales (1917-1922), and used car sales (1920s-1970s). Photo: DCP 1976 survey of historic buildings.

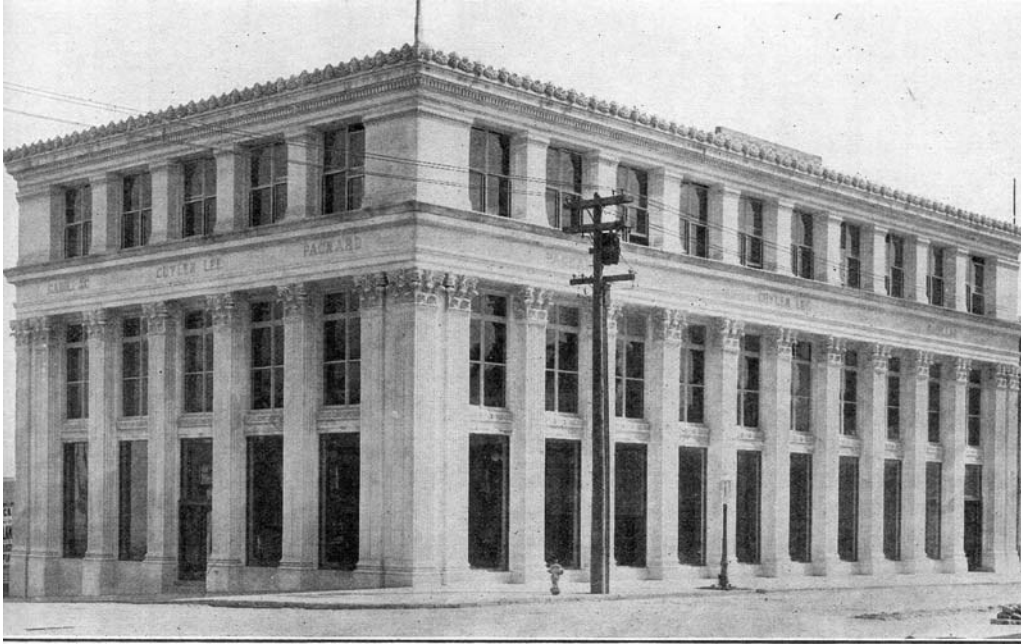
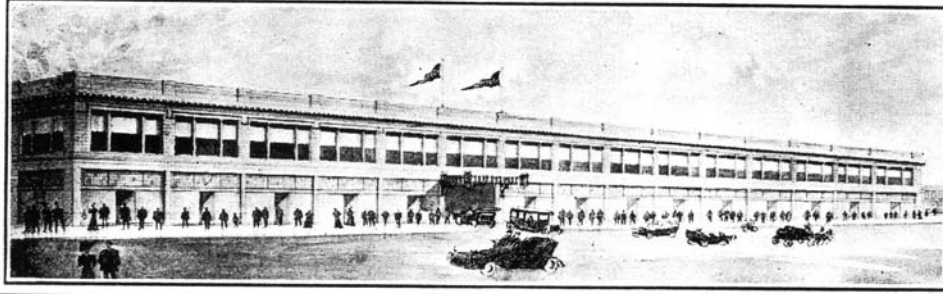
### *Development of Van Ness Avenue as an “Auto Row”*

After downtown was re-built, these merchants deserted Van Ness Avenue, leaving a void. Gradually, it was filled by automobile showrooms. From four such uses in 1908, the number increased to eleven in 1909, to twenty-three in 1910, thirty-six in 1912, thirty-four in 1917, and fifty in 1921. The number of auto showrooms on Van Ness dropped to thirty-seven in 1924, but increased again, to forty-nine, in 1927. During the 1920s a substantial number of these dealers, though less than a third, sold used cars; the rest sold new cars.

Through 1910, nearly all of the auto dealers on Van Ness (20 out of 23) located south of Turk Street. This was probably due to an initial desire to stay close to the original auto row in Golden Gate Avenue. 550 Van Ness, as mentioned above, was located at the southwest corner of Golden Gate Avenue. The largest auto showroom was for the White Company, which occupied all of the east side of Van Ness between Market and Fell (MacDonald and Applegarth, architects; 1908). The finest showroom, architecturally, was Cuyler Lee’s Packard showroom (D. H. Burnham and Co.; 1909-1910). Geographically, it was an anomaly for this period, being located at the northeast corner of Van Ness and Jackson, far north of any of the other showrooms in the city.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The White Company showroom at Van Ness and Market has had three stories added and has been completely remodeled. Cuyler Lee’s showroom at 2000 Van Ness was altered for use as medical offices, with the addition of four new stories, in 1927.



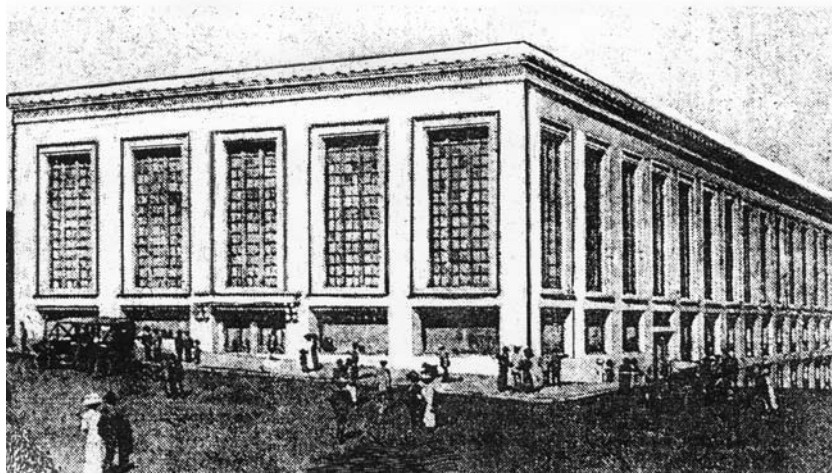
Two early showrooms at the opposite ends of Van Ness Avenue. Top: The White Garage and showroom, at the northeast corner of Van Ness and Market, built in 1908. From *Architect and Engineer*, October 1908. Bottom: Cuyler Lee's Packard showroom, 2000 Van Ness, built in 1909. From *Architect and Engineer*, April 1911. Both buildings have been altered through the addition of extra stories.

Three factors led numerous other auto dealers to move north after 1910. One was the availability of numerous commercial locations along the northern stretch of Van Ness after major businesses deserted the avenue to move back downtown. This released many sites for new commercial uses.

A second, related factor is that after 1910 auto dealers wanted much larger buildings than they had previously occupied; and because mansions with spacious grounds had once stood on upper Van Ness, these larger lots fit the needs of auto dealers quite well.

A third factor was the taking by eminent domain and demolition of two blocks to make room for today's City Hall in 1912. Twelve automobile showrooms and several buildings housing auto support businesses were displaced by this event. These businesses had to go somewhere, and it was clear by 1912 that the trend would be to go north on Van Ness, rather than to Golden Gate Avenue, or south on Van Ness.

The result was that most of the temporary wood-frame storefronts on Van Ness Avenue were quickly demolished. During 1912-1913 seven new buildings were constructed on Van Ness between Geary and Sacramento to house auto showrooms and other auto-related businesses that had been displaced by the new City Hall. Many other auto showrooms soon followed.



H. O. Harrison's showroom at 1200 Van Ness, at the corner of Post Street, by MacDonald and Applegarth, architects. From the *S.F. Examiner*, January 8, 1911. This was the first large showroom to be built in the middle stretch of Van Ness Avenue. The building still stands, but has been thoroughly altered.



1100 Van Ness Avenue, at the corner of Geary, built in 1912-1913 as a salesroom for Stevens-Duryea, Maxwell, and National autos, to designs by architect C. A. Meussdorffer. During the 1920s it was a Reo showroom, and in the 1930s it was Ernest Ingold's Chevrolet showroom. The building still stands but has also been thoroughly altered. Photo: SFPL AAD-4651.

By 1912 the automobile industry was maturing. The era when small firms could build automobiles for sale to the public, and expect to prosper, was coming to an end. A few dozen automobile companies were emerging as nationally prominent by this date, leaving hundreds to fade from the scene. These major auto manufacturers could now insist that the dealers that sold their cars in major cities such as San Francisco be better capitalized and better managed than had been the case in the past. Local dealers would also have to advertise widely and to persuade newspapers to run articles touting the power, durability, up-to-date technology, and stylish lines of the auto brands they sold. They might even be expected to inform the public of the auto races their brand had recently won, and to infer that such prowess would translate into better value for the car buyer. Although the demand for automobiles was huge, and some of the major national manufacturers could sell all the cars their factories could produce, competition was still fierce. New auto makers were emerging all the time, and old ones that had gone bankrupt were being reorganized with new investors. Brands that were popular today might easily be passé tomorrow, and local dealers had to do their part to persuade the public that their brand was the best for the price.

Many San Francisco auto dealers were expected not just to sell cars in San Francisco, but to act as agencies, or distributors, for a “territory” that they would be assigned. That territory might be northern California, the entire state, or several western states. San Francisco agencies were expected to form affiliations with small dealerships elsewhere in this territory, and to distribute cars for them to sell. A high degree of organization was needed by San Francisco dealers in order to fulfill this role.

Besides engaging in advertising and distribution, San Francisco dealers had to offer skilled service for the cars they sold. Some dealers went so far as to establish service and repair affiliates across California. Potential buyers were thus assured that they could get their cars fixed when something went wrong with it, as would probably happen sooner rather than later.

These multiple roles were demanding of San Francisco auto dealers. The major national brands could expect these roles to be fulfilled, however. As great as the competition was between brands, the competition among would-be auto dealers was just as great. Many San Franciscans of means were eager to get into the business, and manufacturers chose the best capitalized, most energetic and promising of them.

Nationally, automobile brands were founded, evolved, and faded from the scene as the economy ebbed and flowed, technologies advanced, and styles changed. Some brands failed because of mismanagement; because their major investors disagreed with the designing engineers; or because of the sheer, almost overwhelming level of competition on the national scene. Locally, individual dealers and distributors had to scramble to acquire new agencies when the auto brands they sold failed, or faded in popularity. Often they could not do so, and went out of business.

Very frequently, during the 1910s and 1920s, a local dealer would brag to automotive reporters at the newspapers about the new auto agency he had just landed, after carefully



considering all of the available options. Usually he told reporters that he had selected this brand of automobile after visiting factories in the east, meeting with executives, and considering the long-term potential of various automobiles. The reporter's news article invariably conveyed the dealer's assurance that the brand he now sold offered the best value in power, durability, styling, and price. Quite often, within a year or sometimes after only several months, the same dealer proudly announced yet another new brand that he had acquired, with the same extravagant claims. Not a word was said about the earlier brand, which had either been dumped or relegated to a supporting role in the dealer's lineup. This process could be repeated a number of times before the dealer found the right mix of brands for his showroom, or went out of business because he could not put together such a mix.

More information about auto showrooms in San Francisco during the 1910s-1930s is given below under the section entitled Property Types. At a finer level, information on individual showroom buildings, on the dealers that occupied them, and on the brands of cars they sold can be found in the DPR 523 forms on these buildings. These forms are included as an appendix to this report.

*The decline of automobile showrooms in the Van Ness Avenue corridor*

Ernest Ingold's Chevrolet showroom of 1937, at 999 Van Ness, was the last showroom for new automobiles built along the Van Ness corridor. After that date, showrooms continued to be built in San Francisco, but they were located elsewhere, in the city's more outlying districts. They were also much smaller than the large showrooms on Van Ness.

This trend had begun in the 1920s. At the beginning of that decade, automobiles were sold in only a very few places west of the study area or south of the Inner Mission district. By 1929, however, approximately seventeen auto sales rooms had been established outside of these boundaries. They were on Market Street west of Octavia, on Mission Street just south of 24<sup>th</sup>, on outer Mission Street near Geneva, on outer Geary Street, and on Potrero Avenue. Several of these were branches of dealerships whose headquarters were on Van Ness.

During the 1940s and 1950s, all of those locales became home to new auto dealerships. There was no sense, then, that the auto row along Van Ness Avenue was fading, but the city had grown, and it was natural for the industry to disperse somewhat. After all, by this time many customers for cars already had cars, and it was easy for them to drive to these places.

In 1977, an article in a business monthly indicated that things had begun to change. Marie Brooks, widow of Ellis Brooks, and still the owner of Ellis Brooks Chevrolet, stated that eighteen dealerships had either closed, merged, or moved to San Jose or Marin City over the past nine years. "You'd have to be a fool to start a dealership on Van Ness now," she said. The article outlined the reasons for this decline. The salesmen in San Francisco had higher commissions and base pay than did salesmen in nearby cities.

Rents were higher, and San Francisco had a payroll tax. Steve Snow of the Northern California Motor Car Dealers Association thought that the old auto showrooms were problematical. “Customers,” he said, “are naturally more impressed with big, open, well-lighted showrooms. Ancient showrooms where you have to go up a floor to look at cars indoors are less appealing.” Martin Swig, a dealer in Japanese and European makes, thought “Van Ness Avenue is horrible – it’s congested, there’s no parking, and the unions are almost making us uncompetitive.” The article said sales along the avenue remained good, but relative to other cities, San Francisco was losing a competitive edge.<sup>16</sup>

The loss of auto dealerships along Van Ness became rapid during 1981-1984. Real estate values in San Francisco boomed then, and Van Ness became one of the districts, along with downtown, that became attractive to developers of office and apartment highrises. Several old auto showrooms were torn down then, including Heald’s College at the northwest corner Post and Van Ness (see below), the Bancroft Building of 1912 at the southeast corner of Sutter and Van Ness (for many years one of H. O. Harrison’s showrooms), and Don Lee’s Cadillac showroom of 1913, at the northwest corner of California and Van Ness. Other auto-related buildings, including the Fisk Rubber Company tire shop at 1431 Van Ness (1911) and the St. Francis Garage at 1240 Post (1916) were also torn down then. These were handsome buildings by major architects, namely, MacDonald and Applegarth, Sylvain Schnaittacher, and the O’Brien Brothers.



Heald’s College, 1201-1215 Van Ness, was built in 1913 to designs by architect Sylvain Schnaittacher. The college, in the upper stories, included an auto repair and design school, while automobile and tire sales occupied the first story. Photo from *The Architect*, April 1913. This building was still occupied by Heald’s College and an auto showroom, and was little changed in appearance, when it was demolished in 1983.

<sup>16</sup> Steve Gelman, “A New Day Dawns for Auto Row,” *San Francisco Business*, September 1977. Other articles chronicled the decline of Auto Row and highrise development there during the 1980s: Walter A. Lawrence, “Real Estate Activity in the Van Ness Corridor,” August 1981, and “Auto Row Survey, Van Ness Corridor,” July 1982 (reports for the real estate industry, at the San Francisco History Center, Main Library). Gerald Adams, “Shakeup along Van Ness may doom Auto Row,” *S. F. Examiner*, March 24, 1981, p. ZA1. Philip Hager, “San Francisco Hopes to Build New Auto Row,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 19, 1982. Harre Demoro, “The Changing Face of Van Ness Avenue,” *S. F. Chronicle*, August 2, 1984, p. 1. Tim Urbonya, “The new view from Van Ness,” *S. F. Examiner*, July 20, 1986, p. R-1.



1601 Van Ness, built in 1912-1913 to designs by the O'Brien Brothers. SFPL photo AAD-4663. This was Don Lee's Cadillac showroom during 1913-1921, and Charles S. Howard's Buick showroom during 1921-1950. This was Howard's headquarters when he owned the race horse Seabiscuit. After 1950 the building was occupied by Lytle Buick, Berl Berry Ford, and Harvey Motors. It, too, was demolished in the 1980s.

A new "Auto Center" was developed at 16<sup>th</sup> and Bryant streets, where Seals Stadium had once stood. This center did not last long, but while it did, it gave dealers a place to move to, and hastened the departure of dealerships from Van Ness Avenue. Today, only a few auto dealers remain on the Avenue. Ellis Brooks Chevrolet recently dropped its General Motors dealership and now sells only used cars. A Ford dealership has moved back into Charles Howard's former showroom at 1595 Van Ness, very slightly reversing the trend.

The garages and auto repair shops in the study area have been more tenacious. Many of these buildings, a few only 25 or 30 feet in width, retain their original use almost 100 years after they were built. Many other buildings – former auto showrooms, garages, and repair shops – have found adaptive reuse as restaurants, stores or offices. Sometimes they have kept their early appearance, and sometimes they have been heavily remodeled.



601 Turk Street, at Polk, by Hladik and Thayer, architects, 1913. Photo from SFPL Assessor's negatives. Built as a Haynes auto showroom, it has been completely remodeled for offices.

### **III. PROPERTY TYPES**

#### Automobile showrooms

##### *History of their development*

Besides showing an ability to promote the brands they sold, local dealers had to show that they could build, or move into, a substantial building that would serve multiple functions. It would have to include an auto showroom that was attractively finished, a well-equipped service department, and substantial storage space for autos on upper floors. More space was needed for a parts department and for an auto painting shop. Because many buyers would wish to trade in their old car when buying a new one, it should ideally have room for used car sales.

In short, a multi-story building was generally required for auto showrooms by 1912. Typically, the showroom would be in the front of the first story, while some or all of the other departments – used car sales, new car storage, service, parts storage, and auto painting – would be in the rear of the first story and in the upper floor or floors. By 1912, reinforced concrete construction was routine for larger auto showrooms. Buildings of this construction type could take the load of stored automobiles, and would also permit wide expanses of windows, which were necessary for display of autos and for allowing natural light for working on cars. Fireproof construction also protected the valuable automobile stock within.

These buildings did not require huge lots of land, but they did require larger lots than was usually available on lower Van Ness Avenue, where rowhouse construction had been the norm before 1906. Larger lots were more common on upper Van Ness, i.e., north of Geary Street, where larger houses had once stood. This was perhaps the main reason that auto showrooms tended to be built along upper Van Ness Avenue after 1912.

Rarely, an automobile dealer would build his own showroom building. Such a course of action was financially risky. An auto dealer might see the brand that he sold go bankrupt and cease production. Just as likely, the national auto manufacturer might yank the agency away from a dealer once his contract was up, and award it to another dealer who was more aggressive in marketing the brand. With such possibilities in mind, local dealers almost invariably leased buildings instead of building their own showrooms. It was very common for a prospective dealer to negotiate with a developer, who would hire an architect to design a showroom according to the prospective dealer's needs. Once this was done, the prospective dealer would use this arrangement to finalize an agreement between himself and an auto manufacturer. The manufacturer and the dealer would sign a contract, guaranteeing the dealer rights to market the brand in a certain territory, and the dealer and the developer would enter into a long-term lease for the showroom, typically for ten years. Only then would construction of the showroom commence. This arrangement was meant to minimize the risk for all parties, but there was still considerable risk. Often, the dealer failed after only a year or two. If he could not find a sub-lessee, the developer had to hope the market remained strong and that a new lessee could be found.

The third method by which auto showrooms were built (other than by developers or by local dealers) was by the national automakers themselves. Occasionally manufacturers preferred to open their own factory branch, and to appoint a regional manager, rather than to work through a local dealer. This choice was made by Pierce-Arrow, at 1001 Polk (1912-1913; extant), and by Willys-Overland, at 1395 Van Ness (1916; altered). More often, however, national manufacturers who wanted to establish a factory branch in San Francisco chose to lease a new or existing building, just as local dealers usually did.

The above paragraphs describe how the larger auto showrooms were built for the most prestigious or popular brands of autos. Of course, other brands of autos that were less well known, or that had passed their peak of popularity, continued to be made in the northern states through the 1910s and into the 1920s; and these companies did not have much leverage when negotiating with prospective dealers. They were eager, if not desperate, to have their brands represented in the big cities, and often had to settle for less established dealers who could only afford to lease modest showrooms. These smaller showrooms were usually less advantageously located than the larger ones were. After the mid-1910s they might be located at the far northern end of the auto row on Van Ness (north of Washington Street), at the southern end (south of Eddy Street), or on one of the east-west streets, usually within a block of Van Ness. Some “showrooms” on these side streets were designed to look like public garages, in the generally valid expectation of the owners that the dealerships that initially occupied them would soon fail, and that the buildings would soon filter down to use as a garage or auto repair shop.

When Charles S. Howard’s Buick showroom at 1595 Van Ness was completed, a newspaper reporter wrote, “Steadily the north end of Van Ness avenue is becoming the center of the automobile industry in San Francisco. One by one the leading firms in the local trade have been moving from the old ‘row’ into new and elaborate quarters in the upper end of the boulevard and the city today easily has one of the most attractive automobile districts in any part of the country.” The writer cited Howard’s “elaborate and spacious showroom” as the latest in the trend. (*SF Call*, May 11, 1913, p. 49.)



Charles S. Howard’s Buick showroom, 1595 Van Ness Avenue, designed by M. J. Lyon, 1913 (extant). Photo: *San Francisco Newsletter*, Christmas number, 1913.

At the end of 1913 a local auto industry writer, R. R. l’Hommedieu, agreed that the city’s “Automobile Row” was now along upper Van Ness. He added that the new buildings were “monuments worthy of the commercial importance of the automobile trade, and today we have along upper Van Ness avenue some of the finest buildings in the West.”<sup>17</sup>

Auto showrooms that were built during the mid-to-late 1910s vividly illustrate the preference that major auto dealers had formed for the more northern blocks of Van Ness. 1560 Van Ness (1917), though moderate in size, was a showroom for, in succession, three popular brands: Studebaker, Hupmobile, and Pontiac. 1700 Van Ness (1919) was a showroom for Chandler, Cleveland, Chevrolet, and Oldsmobile. 1701 Van Ness (1917) was a showroom for Oldsmobile and Ford autos. The finest showroom of this period was 1699 Van Ness (1919), which became the showroom for the Paige (later, Graham-Paige) luxury auto. By contrast, two buildings at the south end of the avenue had minor histories as showrooms. 214 Van Ness (1917) was a small building occupied by a Ford dealership for a decade. 700 Van Ness (1915), though it had a ground floor arcade perfect for showing off autos, was a showroom for new autos for only a year, then “filtered down” to become a used cars sales room. (Of the buildings mentioned here, only 700 Van Ness and 1699 Van Ness still stand without major alterations.)



1701 Van Ness, built in 1917 by engineers and contractors MacDonald and Kahn. It was J. W. Leavitt’s Oldsmobile showroom through 1927, then the Flynn and Collins Ford showroom through 1938. Altered.

Automobile showrooms were also built in places close to, though not on, Van Ness Avenue. The most prominent of these by far was the Pierce-Arrow showroom at 1001 Polk Street, at the corner of Geary, built in 1912-1913 (extant). It remained an auto showroom for this brand and for Reo into the 1930s. Also impressive was the showroom for Haynes autos at 601 Turk Street (1913). However, most showrooms that were not on Van Ness were less pretentious in appearance, and some more nearly resembled public garages. Their history as a place of auto sales almost never lasted for more than a decade. Examples, all extant, include a showroom for the Jeffrey Auto Sales Company, makers of Rambler, at 68 Twelfth Street (1912); 1062 Geary, where Mercedes, Bugatti, and other brands were sold for eight years (1913); 1745 Clay, which was briefly a Renault showroom, and afterward became the Clay Street Garage (1914); and 1670 Pine, which was a Ford salesroom for five years, and afterward an auto repair shop (1917).

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<sup>17</sup> l’Hommedieu, *San Francisco Newsletter*, Christmas number, 1913, p. 64.



The Pierce-Arrow showroom, designed by John Galen Howard and built 1912-1913 (extant). This was by far the finest of the showrooms at locations other than on Van Ness Avenue.

A burst of construction activity occurred in the study area during 1920. Fourteen auto showrooms were completed or begun in the study area during this year, and many garages, auto repair shops, and related buildings were also built. Nationally, auto manufacturers who had been selling every car they could make expanded their factories and absorbed lesser companies. It was not a good time for such expansion, for a major recession or depression hit the country immediately afterward, resulting in a shakeout of auto manufacturers. In San Francisco, construction of auto-related buildings all but halted for several years. Even during the mid-to-late-1920s, when the economy bounced back, and tremendous numbers of apartment buildings and office buildings were built in San Francisco, construction of auto showrooms resumed in only a modest way.

Two auto showrooms of the 1920s stand out from the rest. One was Don Lee's Cadillac showroom at 1000 Van Ness, at the corner of O'Farrell (1920-1921). It pulled the center of auto showroom gravity back to the south by some blocks, but the building was so monumental in scale and luxurious in its details, and Lee was such a well-known figure, that it could do so. The same descriptions held equally true for Earle C. Anthony and his Packard showroom (1926-1927), one block further south at 901 Van Ness. These buildings have always since been the best known of Auto Row's showrooms. Both were designated official City Landmarks in the 1980s.



Don Lee's Cadillac showroom, 1000 Van Ness (extant). Weeks and Day, architects, 1921. (The interior is shown on the front cover of this report.) Photo: SFPL photo AAD-4657.

*Architecture, structure, and planning of automobile showrooms*

The earliest auto showrooms were of wood frame or brick masonry construction, and were modest in their proportions and in their ornamental schemes. They were nevertheless intended to be attractive. The earliest surviving example is 550 Van Ness Avenue, which was built in 1908-1909. Though somewhat larger than other pre-1910 showrooms, it was typical in other ways, in that it is made of brick and is decorated with a fairly elaborate cornice, keystones, and voussoirs in the flat arch above the original main entrance. A smaller building of the same period, 690 Van Ness (1910), is similarly decorated with brick ornament.

The automobile showrooms of 1911-1914 varied in their size, shape, structure, and ornamental schemes, but certain trends can be seen in them, and these trends held true for the showrooms that followed. Typically, the buildings were two or more – usually more – stories in height. The multiple stories allowed an auto dealer to incorporate several departments, each vital to his business, into one building on a compact lot, and to segregate those departments efficiently. The showroom for new automobiles was always in the first story and faced the street; it typically had a high level of finish, with wooden wainscoting and tile floors. The offices for the business were either at the rear of the showroom, in the mezzanine level (attained by a beautifully-detailed staircase), or both. Behind the showroom and offices, in the rear of the first story, was an unfinished or lightly finished area devoted to either the service or used car departments. The upper story or stories were almost always reached via concrete ramps, although in a few buildings, e.g. at 1412-1420 Van Ness (extant) and 1395 Van Ness (altered), vehicles were moved between stories by elevators. The interiors of the upper stories were also unfinished or lightly finished, and were devoted to service, used car sales, heavier repairs,



auto storage, parts storage, and auto painting. For this segregation of departments to work efficiently for auto dealers, careful planning was required before construction began. This planning appears to have involved discussion between the architect for the owner and the initial lessee of the building.

These larger, multi-story showrooms were fireproof in construction, with reinforced concrete piers, floors, and roofs. Some also had steel frames behind the piers. The exterior walls were never left exposed as unfinished concrete, but were instead covered, usually with stucco that had been lightly scored. One building was clad with a veneer of brick, namely 1625 Van Ness (1920; extant). Windows were large and rectangular, and were usually filled with industrial steel sash, which added welcome texture to the façade.

Vehicle entrances required large openings, and these were usually deemphasized by placing them in side or secondary elevations. This was easily accomplished for most showrooms, which occupied corner lots and thus fronted on two streets. For mid-block showrooms such as 1350 Van Ness and 1625 Van Ness, ells were built that extended to side streets, and these ells were devoted to vehicle entry.

Architecturally, the larger auto showrooms were recognizable as a building type even though they varied considerably in their aesthetic. Several were relatively plain, and in these buildings expression of the skeletal concrete construction was emphasized over ornament. Examples of such buildings included 1200 Van Ness (1911; now heavily altered); 1240-1268 Van Ness (1913; demolished); 1600 Van Ness (1913; extant, altered with grilles over the windows); 1601 Van Ness (1913; demolished); 1700 Van Ness (1919; demolished); 1835-1849 Van Ness (1920, 1926; extant); and 1946-1960 Van Ness (1920; extant). Each of these was nevertheless made attractive with a cornice, belt course moldings, and a light scoring of the stucco surface for added texture. In some of them the piers were expressed as classical pilasters to add an additional element of beauty.



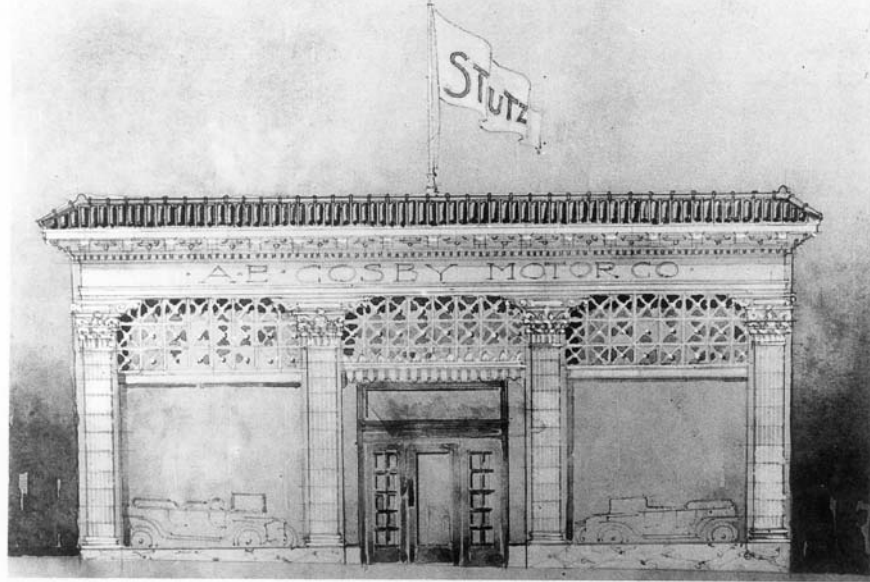
1700 Van Ness (MacDonald and Kahn, 1919; demolished) built as a showroom for Chandler and Cleveland autos. The skeletal construction was lightly decorated with classical ornament. SFPL photo AAD-4652.

Most auto showrooms were more elaborately decorated with Classical Revival ornament. Fine examples included 1100 Van Ness (1912-1913; heavily altered), 1001 Polk (1913; extant), 1201 Van Ness (1913; demolished), 1400 Van Ness (1913; extant), 601 Turk (1913; heavily altered), 1699 Van Ness (1919, 1923; extant), 1000 Van Ness (1921; extant), and 901 Van Ness (1927; extant). Most of these were monumental in their feeling. 1699 Van Ness, by architect Sylvain Schnaittacher, featured a tall ground floor arcade. 901 Van Ness, by Bernard Maybeck and Powers and Ahnden, associated architects, was the most theatrical of these buildings. That building and 1000 Van Ness, by Weeks and Day, had the most elaborate interiors. 601 Turk, by Hladik and Thayer, exhibited some aspects of a classical banking temple.



Two views of 1699 Van Ness Avenue, by Sylvain Schnaittacher. Its ground floor arcade hearkens to the Italian Renaissance. The northern three bays were built in 1919, and the southern two were added in 1923. Top photo: ca. 1953, SFPL Assessor's negatives. Bottom photo: ca. 1930, SFPL photo AAC-6822.

One showroom at 1350 Van Ness (1913; cornice removed, frieze covered) is small, and lacked the monumental feeling of the above showrooms, but expressed classical beauty as well as most of them did.



1350 Van Ness Avenue, George Applegarth, architect, 1913. Courtesy of Dr. J. Jerrold Applegarth.

Two large showrooms were designed in styles other than classical. 1301-1305 Van Ness (1913; extant; originally devoted to tire and auto sales, but later used entirely as an auto showroom) was designed in architects Cunningham and Politeo's preferred Art Nouveau style. 999 Van Ness (1937; extant), by John E. Dinwiddie, followed the Art Deco and Streamlined Moderne styles of the period.



Ernest Ingold showroom, 999 Van Ness Avenue (extant). John E. Dinwiddie, architect, 1937. This was the last auto showroom built on Van Ness Avenue. Photo: SFPL AAD-4670.

When the latter building was completed, Van Ness Avenue from the Civic Center to Broadway was solidly developed with numerous auto showrooms and other auto-related buildings, several churches, and several large apartment buildings, much of this being monumental in scale, and nearly all of it richly detailed.

Large or small, concrete or brick, decorated or spare, classical or otherwise, the showrooms of Auto Row were intended to display to their best advantage an expensive product that almost everyone with financial means wanted, the automobile. They did so by imparting either a sense of monumentality or of beauty, and often of both. At the same time, these buildings had to house less glamorous departments such as service, repair, and auto storage, and these departments were to some degree hidden or disguised in the buildings' upper stories, behind the imposing facades.

### *Surviving auto showrooms*

The oldest auto showrooms in the study area, of 1908-1917, are listed below, in order of construction date, and with notes regarding their use and integrity. These are probably the oldest auto sales buildings in San Francisco as well as in the study area. Buildings that have been completely altered in appearance are omitted from this list.

550 Van Ness. Built 1908-1909. This showroom first housed Ford and Velie brands and is the oldest in the city. The walls and ornament remain intact; window sash has been altered.

2000 Van Ness. Built 1909-1910 as a Packard showroom. It has lost integrity due to alterations and major additions of 1927.

690 Van Ness. Built 1910. A small showroom with only a few years of use as a new auto showroom; its integrity is fair at best.

1301-1305 Van Ness. Built 1911-1912. This large building initially held a tire dealership (Goodyear) and an auto showroom. Later in the 1910s the entire building became devoted to use as an auto showroom. Integrity is good.

1525 Van Ness. Built 1912. This moderately-sized building has only fair integrity.

1430-1480 Van Ness. Built 1912. This building had early, but brief, use as an auto showroom. Window openings have been altered.

68 Twelfth Street. Built 1912. This moderate-sized building had brief use as a Rambler showroom. Its façade has been lightly altered and the window sash has been replaced.

1001 Polk Street. Built 1912-1913. A large showroom built for the Pierce-Arrow brand. Its window sash has been removed, but the integrity of this building is otherwise high.

1400 Van Ness. Built 1912-1913. A large showroom with high integrity. Reo, Packard, Chevrolet, and Ford brands were sold here over the years.

1412-1420 Van Ness. Built in 1912-1913 to house an Oldsmobile showroom and a Firestone tire shop; it later became entirely devoted to auto sales. Integrity is good.

1350 Van Ness. Built in 1912-1913. The cornice of this small showroom, built to house Stutz autos, has been removed.

1595 Van Ness. Built in 1913. A large showroom built for Buick sales. The first story and cornice have been altered, but integrity is otherwise good.

1600 Van Ness. Built in 1913. Large grilles cover the windows, diminishing the integrity.

2050 Van Ness. Built in 1913. A moderately-sized showroom with fifteen years of such use. Four its first four years this building was a showroom and garage for electric cars.

1062 Geary. Built in 1913. This small building had only brief use as an auto showroom.

1745 Clay. Built in 1914. This building had brief use as a Renault showroom, and then became a garage. It has good integrity.

1670 Pine. Built in 1917. This was a Ford auto showroom through 1922, and then an auto repair shop. Integrity is high.

1415 Van Ness. Built as a clothing store, this building had six years of use as an auto showroom, from 1917-1922. Its balustrade has been removed and window sash have been altered.

The best of these, in terms of integrity, longevity of use as an auto showroom, early date, and size or capacity are 1400 Van Ness, 1001 Polk, 1595 Van Ness, 1301-1305 Van Ness, and 1412-1420 Van Ness. Each of these also served as a showroom for major brands. 550-590 Van Ness, 1350 Van Ness, and 1600 Van Ness all had important auto histories, but their integrity is diminished by window or cornice alterations.



1400 Van Ness Avenue, designed by Herman Barth (1912-1913; extant). Photo: DCP 1976 survey of historic buildings.

Note: Many showrooms from this period have been demolished or heavily altered. Some of the finest were: 1200 Van Ness (1911), 601 Turk (1912), 1100-1128 Van Ness (1912-1913), 1601 Van Ness (1912-1913), and 1111-1157 Van Ness (1913).

The best surviving auto showrooms of the 1920s-1930s, in terms of integrity, longevity of use for new auto sales, and major brands sold, include:

1699 Van Ness. Built in 1919, opened in early 1920, and expanded in 1923. A large showroom with high integrity; it was principally a showroom for the Paige brand of autos.

1625 Van Ness. Built 1920. A large building with mostly good integrity. It was occupied by several auto dealers, each for relatively brief periods, during 1920-1938.

1835-1849 Van Ness. Built 1920 and 1926. Plaster ornament at the top of the piers has been removed, the ground floor has been remodeled, and the window sash has been replaced in-kind. Overall, integrity is good. The building held major brands – first Nash, then Dodge and Plymouth – through at least 1960.

1946-1960 Van Ness. Built 1920. Oakland and Duesenberg autos, among other brands, were sold here from 1920 to 1930. Integrity is high.

1000 Van Ness. Built 1920-1921. This was Don Lee Cadillac, and then other Cadillac dealerships, through the 1960s. Its integrity remains high, even after its conversion into a movie theater.

901 Van Ness. Built 1926-1927. This was a Earle C. Anthony's Packard showroom into the 1960s, and remains an auto showroom. Some alterations have occurred, but integrity is still generally high.

999 Van Ness. Built 1937. This was Ernest Ingold's Chevrolet dealership into the 1960s, and then George Olsen Chevrolet. Integrity is high.

## Public garages

### *History of their development*

Public garages, also called commercial garages, were the 20<sup>th</sup> century version of a livery stable. They had several uses for motorists, most obviously for overnight storage of their cars. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century few automobile owners had a private garage underneath or adjacent to their houses, and street parking was problematical, for automobiles then had open or canvas tops, and some had wooden bodies, and were vulnerable to rainy weather. Many auto owners, then, kept their cars in public garages overnight. Garages advertised nightly and monthly rates, the latter being attractive to those who used garages close to their residence on a regular basis.

Garages kept gasoline on the premises for the purpose of refueling their customers' cars. They also performed servicing of vehicles and light repairs. Some garages were better equipped with machine shops and other equipment than others were, and could perform

heavier repairs. Some garages were able to recharge the batteries of electric cars, an auto type that remained common into the 1920s. During the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, then, public garages were an essential feature of the automotive landscape. They provided many more services than the parking garages of today do.

Because garages performed light repairs on autos, and some garages performed heavier repairs, the distinction between garages and auto repair shops sometimes became blurred. Some buildings that were built as garages later became repair shops; some buildings went back and forth between these two business types. It seems that some proprietors attempted to position themselves as offering both services. Frequently, a building that looked like a garage from the outside actually had two businesses in it: a garage on one floor (usually the first), and an auto repair shop on the other. Some buildings were built with this dual use, and others were modified at an early date to allow them both.

Public garages could be found in many if not most San Francisco neighborhoods. They were most common in the neighborhoods closest to downtown, where the population density was greatest. The general downtown area, Lower Nob Hill, the Tenderloin, the Van Ness Avenue corridor, and the Western Addition all had numerous garages.

The earliest known garages in San Francisco were located within the study area of this report, i.e., along the Van Ness corridor. The first was the White Garage, which opened in 1903 at the corner of Market and Franklin streets. It was operated by the White Sewing Machine Company, a national firm that also manufactured and sold automobiles. The second that is known of was the Auto Livery Company, which was built in 1905 at the northwest corner of Golden Gate and Van Ness. This business also sold cars while offering garage services.

After 1906, the Van Ness Avenue corridor continued to have a larger share of garages than almost any other part of San Francisco. In 1908 the study area had 36% of all of the garages in San Francisco. That percentage quickly lessened as new garages were built around the city: to 28% in 1910, 20% in 1914, and 12% or 13% during 1918-1929. This was still a considerable share, considering the study area is only four blocks wide. In 1929, the study area had 30 public garages, out of 236 in San Francisco.

#### *Architecture, structure, and planning of public garages*

The very earliest public garages were one story in height and were often constructed of wood. By the end of the first decade of the 1900s, and into the early 1910s, they were usually constructed of brick, and many were two stories in height. Brick was a huge improvement over wood, but as a construction type it was quickly replaced by reinforced concrete. Because of the fire risks that came with the storage of gasoline on the premises, fireproof construction for garages – meaning, for practical purposes, construction of reinforced concrete – was soon required by law.

*Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures: A Survey of Automobile-Related Buildings*



Four early garages, all made of brick, with symmetrical facades. In the top photo are 1) at right, the Alaska Garage, 1349 Larkin Street, by architects Ward and Blohme, 1909-1910; and 2) at left (partially visible), the Graystone Garage, 1335 Larkin, by John H. Powers, 1913-1914 (both extant). In the center photo is the Crown Garage, 1650 Jackson, 1910 (demolished). At bottom is the Pine Garage, 1461 Pine, 1911 (altered).



The oldest surviving examples in San Francisco are brick masonry in construction, and the rest, built from the mid-1910s onward, are of reinforced concrete. In these buildings, the vehicle entrance or entrances are the most prominent element of the façade, and the rest of the façade was, to a large degree, designed around these openings.

The facades are usually two or three bays in width, and symmetrical. Ornamentation is usually classical in style, and is sometimes elaborate. Openings often have arched or segmental arched tops. While the effect is restrained compared to that of auto showrooms, the design of public garages nevertheless had a showy aspect to them, one that corresponded to the fact that owners were being asked to entrust to the proprietors the care and housing of their expensive vehicles.

Most public garages are two stories in height. In such buildings, one of the vehicle entrances leads to a concrete ramp that rises to the second story. A one-story-plus-basement garage, at 1641 Jackson (1914; extant), has a ramp that descends to the basement.



The Admiral Garage, 550 Turk Street. Joseph Pasqualetti, builder, 1924. It is two stories in height, two bays in width, and reinforced concrete in construction. Pasqualetti was a prolific builder of reinforced concrete buildings; here he employed both classical and Gothic decorative details.



Kay's Garage, 1650-1660 Pacific Avenue. O'Brien Brothers, architects, 1921. This three-bay, two-story, reinforced concrete, Tudor Revival-style garage is similar to another garage by the same architects at 66 Page Street (1924). In this building, the original industrial steel sash windows have been replaced.

By the early or mid-1910s, garages took on a form that became almost standard. Most were reinforced concrete in construction, two stories in height, two or three bays in width, and symmetrical in composition. Often the bays were of equal width. One or two of the bays were devoted to vehicle entrances, and in the latter case, one led onto the ground floor and the other led up a ramp to the second floor. The capacity of garages varied. Among extant garages in the study area of this report, the smallest was the Greeneisch Garage at 364 Hayes, which held 30 cars. The largest were the Jackson Garage, at 1641 Jackson; the Kern Garage, at 1700-1710 Pine; and the Admiral Garage, at 550 Turk; all of which had capacities of 120 to 125 cars. Most garages in the study area held at least 75 automobiles.



St. Francis Garage, 1240 Post Street, built in 1916 to designs by Sylvain Schnaittacher. Photo by William Kostura, 1983. This was a Class A steel-frame building with a brick front. It had the usual three-bay composition and industrial steel sash windows, but its zig-zag parapet and cornice were unique. This building and the adjacent Heald's College, also by Schnaittacher, were demolished in 1983.



One of the early reinforced concrete garages in the study area: the Jackson Garage, at 1641 Jackson Street, 1914 (extant). Sanborn maps give its capacity as 125 cars. Its architects, the O'Brien Brothers, were the most prolific designers of public garages in San Francisco. This building has a central block three bays in width plus small flanking pavilions. It retains its wood-framed windows, including those in the monumental arch. Photo: Dept. of City Planning, Van Ness Avenue Plan, 1980s.

### *Surviving examples of public garages*

Presently, nineteen buildings that were once used as public garages still stand in the study area and have at least fair integrity. Another seventeen garage buildings that once stood in the study area have been demolished or severely altered. In sum, roughly half of the garages that have ever stood in the study area survive to illustrate this building type today.

The oldest examples of public garages in the study area, with notes regarding date of construction, longevity of use (counted through 1964), and integrity, are:

The Alaska Garage, 1349 Larkin Street. Built as a private garage in 1909-1910; it became a public garage in 1913. Years of use as a public garage: 14. During most of its years as a garage it was joined with its next-door neighbor, the Graystone Garage at 1335 Larkin, as a single business. Its integrity is high.

The Pine Garage, 1461 Pine Street. Built 1911. Years of public garage use: 28. Its integrity has been harmed by the sandblasting of its brick façade and the installation of modern metal windows.

Graystone Garage, 1335 Larkin Street. Built 1913-1914. Years of public garage use: 27. Integrity is high.

The Jackson Garage, 1641 Jackson Street. Built 1914. Years of public garage use: 31. Integrity is high.

Clay Street Garage, 1745 Clay Street. Built 1914. Years of public garage use: 33, beginning in 1917. Its windows have been altered, but otherwise integrity is high.

Marine View Garage, 2020 Van Ness Avenue. Built 1914. Years of public garage use: 22. Its initial use as a garage was brief (1914-1915); its main garage use was during 1922-1942. Integrity is high.

Inverness Garage #2, 1267 Bush Street. Built 1917-1918. Years of public garage use: 27. Integrity is high.

Patrick J. Kelly garage, 731-799 Van Ness Avenue. Built 1916-1917. Years of public garage use: 24 (beginning in 1919). This building was simultaneously occupied by an auto painting shop and an auto repair shop, and so is also discussed under multiple-use buildings, below. Its integrity is high.

To summarize, all of these are excellent examples of early garages except for 1461 Pine, which has been fairly extensively altered, and 2020 Van Ness, which was mainly used as a garage in the 1920s and later.<sup>18</sup>

Garages in the study area from the 1920s, with notes regarding date of construction, years of garage use (counted through 1964), and integrity, include:

The Greeneisch Garage, 364 Hayes Street. Built 1920. Years of public garage use: 30. Integrity is good.

Sequoia Garage, 730 Ellis Street. Built 1920. Years of public garage use: 23. Integrity is good.

Kay's Garage, 1650-1660 Pacific Avenue. Built 1921. Years of public garage use: 20. Window sash has been altered, and integrity is otherwise high.

Hub Garage, 1661-1667 Market Street. Built 1920-1921. Years of public garage use: 12 (beginning in 1922). Integrity is good.

Van Ness Garage, 2100 Van Ness. Built 1919. Years of public garage use: 13 (beginning in 1922). Integrity is fair at best.

Inverness Garage #1, 1565 Bush Street. Built 1923. Years of public garage use: 18. Integrity is high.

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<sup>18</sup> Outside of the study area, only six other San Francisco public garages from the 1910s are known of. They include 618-634 Stanyan (1911), 1419 Pacific Avenue (1914), 1776 Green (1914), 2405 Bush (1916), 3536 Sacramento (1917), and 651-675 Post (1918). It is probable that a few others may someday be identified.

Marius Bosc Garage, 1725 Sacramento Street. Built 1923. Years of public garage use: 25. Integrity is high.

Grand Central Garage, 66 Page Street. Built 1924. Years of public garage use: 13. Integrity is good to high.

Marine View Garage, 2020 Van Ness Avenue. This building is repeated from the list above, as its main garage use began in 1924.

Kern Garage, 1700-1710 Pine Street. Built 1925. Years of public garage use: 33. Integrity is high.

Admiral Garage, 550 Turk Street. Built 1924. Years of public garage use: 23 (beginning in 1926). Integrity is high.

All of these are good or fine examples of public garages except for 2100 Van Ness, which has fair integrity at best.

The nineteenth garage building in the study area is at 1101 Sutter Street. It was originally built as Heald's automobile engineering school, and became a garage (for 29 years) beginning in 1936. This building is better discussed under a separate category, below.



The Clay Street Garage, 1745 Clay Street, by architect James R. Miller, 1914. The window sash has been altered, but this brick masonry garage is otherwise intact. Photo: SFPL Assessor's negatives.



The Marius Bosc Garage, 1725 Sacramento Street, by architect Arthur S. Bugbee, 1923. This symmetrically-designed reinforced concrete garage still stands with all of its industrial steel sash windows intact. Photo: SFPL Assessor's negatives.

### Multiple-use buildings

During 1912-1923 several buildings in the study area were built to hold three or more auto-related businesses at a given time. These businesses included auto showrooms, public garages, auto repair shops, and various kinds of specialty service shops, among others. This was a rare building type, but an important one that served owners of automobiles in varied ways.

### *Architecture of multiple-use buildings*

These buildings are larger than most auto repair shops or public garages and are made of reinforced concrete. The decorative schemes and window sash are most similar to those in garages. Most notable, architecturally, is 731-799 Van Ness, by Willis Polk and Company (1917, 1925), with its profiled cornices, a chamfered corner at Van Ness and Eddy, and a wooden classical entrance in this cornice. 1575-1595 Bush Street, by Meyer and Johnson (1923), has a profiled cornice with moldings, impressions of arches in its frieze, and paired Corinthian pilasters. A series of pineapples, that have since decayed and been removed, once topped its cornice. 824 Ellis (1920) has restrained ornament applied to a three-bay composition.



1575-1595 Bush Street (1923), detail of Bush street side, with original industrial steel sash windows

*Surviving examples of multiple-use buildings*

The best examples of this building type are:

731-799 Van Ness Avenue. Built in 1917, and added to in 1925, it held three different businesses in its early years. They included auto repair shops (1917-1925, 1933-1937, 1939-1940, 1944-1954), an auto painting shop (1918-1932), and a public garage (1919-1942). Later the entire building was used as the service shop of an auto dealer. Integrity is high.

1575-1595 Bush Street. Built in 1923 to hold multiple auto-related shops. They included auto tops and trimming shops, auto painting shops, auto repair shops, a wheel alignment shop, and a carburetor shop. Ground floor windows have been altered; those above are intact. This very fine example has not been formally evaluated for this survey report because its demolition was approved before this report was completed.

824 Ellis Street. Built in 1920. It is uncertain how often this building held two businesses, and how often three, at a given time. Occupants included auto repair shops (1920-1936), auto body and auto tops and trimming shops (1920-1929), a piston rings shop (1927-1929), an auto painting and bodywork shop (1938-1940), a used autos wholesaler (1938-1964), and a body and fender work shop (1946-1964).

Buildings of this type with lesser integrity include:

1430-1480 Van Ness Avenue. Built in 1912. This building held new auto dealers, used auto dealers, tire shops, auto supplies stores, and auto finance shops. Window sash has been altered.

1600-1630 Van Ness Avenue. Built in 1913. This building held auto showrooms, used car salesrooms, the auto body building shop of Larkins and Company, and auto supplies and tires shops. The large window openings in this building have been covered with modern grilles.



731-799 Van Ness Avenue. The first story of this reinforced concrete multiple-use building was built in 1916-1917 to designs of Willis Polk and Co., and the second story was added by the same firm in 1925, a year after Polk's death. Occupants through the early 1940s included auto repair shops, auto painting shops, and the Patrick J. Kelly Garage. Photo: Department of City Planning Van Ness Avenue Plan, 1980s.



1575-1595 Bush Street. Built in 1923 to designs by architects Meyer and Johnson for Joseph Pasqualetti. It held auto tops and trimming, auto painting, auto repair, a wheel alignment, and carburetor shops. As mentioned above, its demolition was approved before the completion of this survey.



### Automobile engineering schools

An automobile engineering school was one that trained people to design, repair, and build automobiles, and to machine replacement parts for them. Only one business that lasted for more than a few years in San Francisco belonged to this category. That was Heald's, which occupied three buildings within the study area during the three decades after 1906.

Heald's College was founded in 1863 as a business college. Shortly before 1906 it added a department of mining engineering. After its old location was destroyed in the earthquake and fire, Heald's rebuilt at 425 McAllister, close to the city's new auto row, and added an automobile engineering school to its curriculum. This new building was taken by eminent domain in 1912, for the Civic Center, and Heald's then moved to the northwest corner of Post and Van Ness, where it continued to teach business, engineering, and automobile engineering. (That building has been demolished.) In 1920 Heald's moved its auto engineering school to a new building at 1101 Sutter (extant). It remained here for fifteen years before moving to 915 North Point Street.

Other automobile-related schools besides Heald's existed in San Francisco before World War II, but none of them lasted more than a few years, and none compared with Heald's in their range of courses.



Heald's Engineering and Automobile School, 1101 Sutter Street. S. Heiman, architect, 1920. This is the last surviving example in the study area of this rare building type.

## Automobile repair shops

### *History of their development*

In the very early years, to sell automobiles in San Francisco probably meant taking on a second role, that of being an auto repairman. The first automobiles were notoriously unreliable, and since auto repair shops had not yet sprung up, if you needed work done on your car, you probably drove it, if it would still run, back to where you bought it.

Machine shops also, in all likelihood, found themselves doubling as auto repair shops. Wagon building shops and even bicycle shops may have also been pressed into service by desperate car owners. Anyone with tools and mechanical ability might do in a pinch.

The first business to advertise in city directories under the heading of “automobile repair” was, in fact, a bicycle shop, and it was located within the study area of this report. This was the shop of Leavitt and Bill, owned by John W. Leavitt and John T. Bill, at 307-309 Larkin Street. These two men imported several brands of bicycles to sell, and in 1904 they also began to sell Reo automobiles and to offer general auto repair services. In that year their staff included a machinist and future shop owner, George H. Woodward.<sup>19</sup>

During the period 1908-1929, from 32% to 53% of all auto repair shops in San Francisco were located within the study area. This was a far greater percentage than could be found elsewhere in the city (for example, in South-of-Market, where from 8% to 15% of auto repair shops were located during these years). By 1929, the number of auto repair shops in the study area had risen to 93.

### *Early auto repairmen in the study area*

Many machinists and auto repairmen who worked in San Francisco when the auto industry was in its infancy became proprietors of auto repair shops and remained in business for many years. Some whose auto repair shops still stand include:

Eugene S. Miner. He began working as a machinist in 1901 for Dorville Libby, Jr., at the latter’s Sunset Automobile Co. In 1910 he and Libby opened an auto repair shop at 1415 Van Ness (extant), where Miner remained under various partnerships through 1916. He continued to own auto repair shops in San Francisco until his death in 1943, most notably at 1540 Bush (extant). His son then continued the business.

Harry M. Nicolson. He worked in bicycle repair in 1901, was a machinist in 1908, became the foreman of George H. Woodward’s auto repair shop in 1910, and opened his own machine shop before 1914. In 1915 he opened an auto repair shop at 155 Grove, where he remained until 1937. This building is the oldest auto repair shop that remains standing in the study area.

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<sup>19</sup> John W. Leavitt went on to become an important automobile dealer in San Francisco, selling Oldsmobile, Oakland, Willys, and other major brands through the 1920s. Woodward later worked in auto repair and opened his own auto parts machine shop in the study area.

John Blausef. He had an auto repair and machinist shop at 81 City Hall Avenue from 1905 to 1920, then moved his shop to 845 Polk Street (extant), where he remained to 1927.

Ernest Hanni. A native of Switzerland, he came to San Francisco in 1905, owned an auto repair shop on Fulton Street during 1906-1910, then worked for the Jerome Garage as the manager of its service department and machine shop. Under its auspices he wrote several articles for the *Chronicle* newspaper on auto repair and maintenance. He next worked for Charles S. Howard's Buick dealership, where he was the foreman of the "mechanical department," and in 1917 he opened Hanni Auto Repair Company, at 1630 Franklin Street (demolished). In 1921 he moved to his own building at 1765 California, where he remained in partnership with Andrew P. Girerd, as Hanni and Girerd, through 1935. This building is extant and is the largest auto repair shop building in the study area. He split with Girerd and opened a new shop with his son, Ernest A. Hanni, at 895 O'Farrell, where he retired in 1943. The elder Hanni died in 1956, and his son continued the business of Hanni and Company at 1641 Jackson Street into the 1980s.

Earl E. Robbins. He owned auto repair shops in the study area from 1917-1943, first at 129 Grove (demolished), then at 55 Oak (extant). His successor in this business, Robert J. Francoz, continued the business at 55 Oak until 1962.

#### *Architecture and structure of auto repair shops*

Auto repair shops were almost always made of brick through 1919, a much later date than was the case with public garages or auto showrooms. In 1920, most repair shops were still made of brick, but some were built of reinforced concrete. After 1920 construction was always of reinforced concrete. Like garages, auto repair shops featured one or more vehicle entrances prominently in the façade.

The original windows in these buildings are typically divided into many lights: either of wood sash, as at 300 Grove (1920), or of steel sash, as at 824 Ellis (1920), 1765 California (1929), and 55 Oak (1929). 1522-1524 Bush (1916), originally an auto parts store but later devoted to auto repair, has now-rare pivoting wooden windows in the second story.



1522-1524 Bush Street: pivoting windows

As far as ornament is concerned, the feeling in these buildings is usually more utilitarian than it is in public garages, but no examples are absolutely plain and some are highly attractive. Cornices and moldings are almost universal decorative features. 155 Grove Street (1915) has a cornice or pent roof covered with imitation clay tiles. 1465 Pine (1917) has a shallow Romanesque cornice formed of bricks. 1644 Pine (1917) has a cornice and paneled pilasters. 300 Grove employs delicate brickwork, with arched openings defined by courses of bricks and a cornice of corbelled bricks. At 1765 California (1921, 1927; extant), which was the largest auto repair shop in the study area (if not in San Francisco), an elaborately decorated central pavilion is flanked by severe wings. 843 and 845 Polk (each 1920) are the plainest of these buildings, but each has a fairly prominent shaped parapet reminiscent of the Mission Revival style.

### *Surviving automobile repair shops*

The following discussion is a comparative study of buildings in the study area that have held auto repair shops. This category includes shops that did general auto repair and body rebuilding. It does not include specialty service shops such as electrical, batteries, brakes, tires, auto tops and trimming, fender, and radiator shops, as those are considered under a separate category.

Today, over 40 surviving buildings in the study area still stand that were occupied by auto repair shops for at least seven years of their history (through 1964, the end year of the period being studied). Of these forty-plus buildings, some are better examples of this building type than are others. The best examples are: the oldest ones; those with the greatest longevity as auto repair shops; and those with the highest integrity. The largest auto repair shops, i.e. those with the greatest capacity, could also be considered as better examples than smaller ones, because presumably more autos were repaired in them; but smaller repair shops can still have significance, for they were once very numerous, were a common part of the landscape, but have now become scarce.

The best examples of auto repair shops are listed below, in three groups.

Four buildings held auto repair shops beginning in the 1910s, for periods of over 20 years (counting through the year 1964), and have at least good integrity. They qualify as the oldest good examples of auto repair shops in the study area:

155 Grove Street. Harry M. Nicolson's shop. This is the oldest building in the study area that was built (in 1915) as an auto repair shop. Integrity is good.

731-799 Van Ness Avenue. Auto repair use beginning in 1917, for 28 years. Integrity is high. This was a large multi-use building; it held a public garage and an auto painting shop in addition to an auto repair shop.

1465 Pine Street. Auto repair use beginning in 1917, for at least 30 years; a small shop. Integrity is good.

1644 Pine Street. Auto repair use beginning in 1918, for 46 years. Integrity is high.

*The next-oldest examples, with excellent longevity*

Seven buildings held auto repair shops beginning in the 1920s, had over 30 years of such use (counting through 1964), and retain high integrity. These are exceptional examples of this building type, even though they are not as old as those dating to the 1910s. Three of these are small, but are still good examples due to their moderately early date, excellent longevity, and high integrity. The seven include:

300 Grove Street. Built in 1920, it held auto repair shops for 38 years. The brick façade is exceptional, and almost all of the wooden windows remain in place.

650 Polk Street. Built in 1920, it held auto repair shops for 40 years. This is a small building on the scale of 1465 Pine, 843 Polk, and 845 Polk.

843 Polk Street. Built in 1920, it held auto repair shops for 44 years. This is a small building on the scale of 1465 Pine, 650 Polk, and 845 Polk.

845 Polk Street. Built in 1920, it held auto repair shops for 38 years, including that of John Blausef, active in this work since 1905. This is a small building on the scale of 1465 Pine, 650 Polk, and 843 Polk.

824 Ellis Street. Auto repair use beginning in 1920, for 35 years. This was one of the larger and more architecturally distinguished auto repair shops in the study area.

1765 California Street. Hanni and Girerd's shop. Auto repair use beginning in 1921, for 43 years. This was the largest auto repair shop in the study area.

55 Oak Street. Earl E. Robbins' shop. Auto repair use beginning in 1929, for 35 years.

Other auto repair shop buildings in the study area are of interest in other ways. They include:

1415 Van Ness Avenue. This is the earliest auto repair shop building in the study area. It was not built for such use, however, but rather as a clothing store, in 1906. Eugene S. Miner's auto repair shop was here during 1910-1916. Auto showrooms were here afterward.

1575-1595 Bush. This building held multiple auto-related uses, including repair shops, upon its completion in 1923.

550 Turk Street. Built as a garage, this building also held an auto repair shop for 21 years.

1540 Bush Street. This was built as a battery shop. Eugene S. Miner's auto repair shop was here from 1927-1941.

1522-1524 Bush Street. Built as an auto supplies store, this building held an auto repair shop for 34 years beginning in 1931.

730 Ellis Street. After long use as a garage, this held an auto repair shop for 29 years beginning in 1936.



1465 Pine Street, built in 1917 and one of the oldest auto repair shops in the study area. Although only 25 feet in width, it is still used as an auto repair shop. Photo: Department of City Planning 1976 survey.



300 Grove Street, a brick auto repair shop with wooden window sash, built in 1920 to designs by architect A. Lacy Worswick.



824 Ellis, a reinforced concrete auto repair shop with original steel sash. Built by the prolific builder William Helbing in 1920.



Hanni and Girerd's reinforced concrete auto repair shop, the largest in the study area, at 1765 California Street. The western wing was built first, in 1921, by architect T. Paterson Ross. The ornamental central pavilion and east wing were added in 1927 by Hyman and Appleton. This building's recent conversion to a grocery store retained the original steel sash windows.

## Automobile parts and supplies stores

### *History of their development*

The first business that advertised in city directory classified as selling auto parts was C. W. Marwedel, a general machinists' supply house on First Street, in 1901. Leavitt and Bill, at 307-309 Larkin, also began to sell auto supplies in 1904, and they were the first to do so in the study area. The number of businesses of this type in the city sharply rose after 1906.

Sellers of auto parts and supplies in San Francisco tended to congregate in the study area, close to the auto showrooms. 36% of such businesses were in the study area in 1908. This percentage rose to an all-time high of 76% in 1911. Thereafter it fluctuated: for example, 53% in 1918, and 63% in 1929. In the latter year, there were 75 such businesses in the study area alone.

These figures are a little misleading, for most of the large automobile dealers in the study area sold auto supplies, and advertised as doing so. Subtract the auto dealers, and the percentage of San Francisco's auto parts stores that were in the study area would be less dramatic. Nevertheless, the study area was clearly the primary neighborhood where auto parts stores, especially the larger ones, could be found.



Chanslor and Lyon's wholesale auto parts and supplies store, 730 Polk Street. Built in 1922 to designs by architect W. L. Schmolle. Integrity is high.



One auto supply business dominated the field in San Francisco: Chanslor and Lyon. It had been founded in Los Angeles, and was already an established business there by the time it opened a branch store in San Francisco, in 1906. During its first sixteen years here C&L occupied four leased buildings in the study area, all now demolished. In 1922 they built 730 Polk Street (extant) to house their wholesale auto supplies and tires store. The *San Francisco Examiner* called it “the largest on the Pacific Coast devoted exclusively to housing automotive equipment.” Chanslor and Lyon remained in this building until 1966. Both Walter Chanslor and Philip Lyon remained officers in this business (president and vice-president) through 1948.

*Architecture of automobile parts and supplies stores*

The largest and finest of these, 730 Polk (1922), is brick masonry in construction, with wooden piers, joists, and girders. It derives its architectural feeling primarily from its tan and buff-colored brick cladding, which has an exceptionally warm tone. Windows have industrial steel sash. Ornament includes a somewhat heavy cornice, a profiled belt course, and shields emblazoned with the letters C&L, for the first occupant, Chanslor and Lyon.

1033-1037 Polk (1920) is reinforced concrete in construction, and has a liberal amount of classical ornament applied to bays of equal width. 1522-1524 Bush (1916) is made of brick and is notable for its row of wooden, pivoting windows in the second story, a feature that has become rare.



Upper portion of 1033-1037 Polk Street, showing classical ornament. Arthur S. Bugbee, architect, 1920. Auto parts stores occupied the two storefronts from 1920 into the early 1930s.

*Surviving automobile supply stores*

In terms of early date, longevity of this use (through 1964), and integrity, the best examples of auto supplies stores in the study area include:

1430-1480 Van Ness Avenue. Built in 1912. Years of auto supply use: 18. Integrity is fair.

1522-1524 Bush Street. Built in 1920. Years of auto supply use: 12. Integrity is good to high.

1033-1037 Polk Street. Built in 1920. Years of auto supply use: 13. Integrity is high.

730 Polk Street (Chanslor and Lyon). Built in 1922. Years of auto supply use: 42 years. Integrity is high.

Tire stores

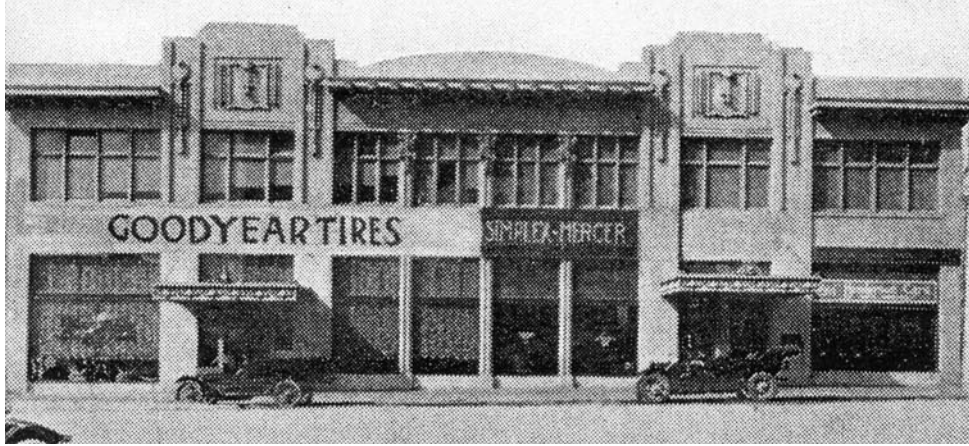
*History of their development*

This category could have also been included with Specialty Service Shops (below), but because national tire makers were prominently represented in the study area, and occupied conspicuous buildings, it seems important enough to be discussed separately.

Manufacturers of rubber goods began to make solid tires for carriages, wagons, and bicycles, and then pneumatic tires for bicycles and automobiles as the market for such developed. National businesses devoted primarily or entirely to manufacturing automobile tires emerged in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A few such had outlets in San Francisco as early as 1905. In 1906, after the earthquake and fire, three of four tires dealers in the city were in the study area. In 1914, there were 37 tire dealers in the city, and 76% of them were in the study area. The percentage dipped as the numbers of dealers increased; for example, in 1929, 37% of the city's 100 tires dealers were in the study area.

The country's major tires manufacturers, Goodyear and Firestone, both based in Akron, Ohio, vacillated between having their own factory branch stores in San Francisco and selling tires through local dealers. Each opened a factory branch in San Francisco, and in each case the tire companies are known to have negotiated with the building owners regarding their needs before the building was designed and built. In the case of Firestone, the building plans were approved by H. S. Firestone in Akron before a lease was signed. Michelin and other tire manufacturers also opened factory branches in the study area, and other tire dealers were represented by local dealers.



1301-1305 Van Ness Avenue, built in 1912 for the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, to designs by Cunningham and Politeo. Goodyear occupied half of the ground floor and all of the second floor for five years, leaving in 1917. The building still stands with good to high integrity. Photo (with retouched signage) from *S.F. Newsletter*, Christmas number, 1913.



1412-1420 Van Ness Avenue, built in 1913 for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, which occupied half of this building for ten years. The building still stands, with good to high integrity. This photo, from the late 1920s, shows the building as an auto showroom. SFPL photo AAD-4672.

### *Architecture of tire stores*

Tire stores in the study area had quite varied appearances. The two largest, at 1301-1305 Van Ness and 1412-1420 Van Ness (both extant), shared these buildings with auto dealerships, and so more closely resembled auto showrooms. Two much smaller tire stores, at 636 Van Ness and 1431 Van Ness (both 1911; demolished), managed pretentious appearances; the former resembled a small classical banking temple, and the latter had a restrained Italian Renaissance style. 1644 Pine (1912-1913; extant) and 1650 Pine (1917; extant) were more utilitarian in appearance, resembling auto repair shops.

The smallest tire stores occupied storefronts within larger commercial buildings; 1233-1237 Van Ness and 1430-1480 Van Ness (both extant) were examples of this type. A prominent, late example, the Kahn and Keville shop at 500 Turk (1935; extant), had wings that embraced an outdoor space where autos could park and maneuver.



The United States Tire Company, at 636 Van Ness. W. H. Crim, architect, 1911.  
Photo from *Architect and Engineer*, January 1919. Demolished.



Fisk Tire Company, 1431 Van Ness. MacDonald and Applegarth, architects, 1911.  
Photo from a montage in the *San Francisco Newsletter*, Christmas number, 1913. Demolished.

*Surviving tire stores*

Seven buildings that held tire stores beginning in the 1910s still stand in the study area. They include:

1301-1305 Van Ness Avenue. This was Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company's factory branch for five years, from 1912-1917. Here, Goodyear had spacious quarters encompassing half of the first story plus the entire second story. The rest of the building was divided into small auto showrooms. Goodyear sold tires directly to the public from this building, but at the same time also distributed through local dealers, such as auto dealerships and small tire shops. After 1917, Goodyear elected to leave 1301-1305 Van Ness and to sell only through these dealers. Goodyear's next location in San Francisco, at 1563-1565 Mission Street (extant), from 1917 to 1923, may have been used primarily as a warehouse from which to supply these dealers, although this is uncertain.

1412-1420 Van Ness Avenue. This was Firestone's factory branch for ten years, 1913-1923. Firestone occupied half of this two-story-plus-basement building, the rest of which was occupied by an auto showroom. Firestone's space was smaller than Goodyear's, but it stayed here for twice as long as Goodyear had stayed at its first site.

1644 Pine Street. The entire building was occupied during 1913-1919 by the Michelin factory branch at 1644 Pine Street (extant).

1233-1237 Van Ness Avenue. This building originally had three storefronts, two of which were occupied by tire companies upon its completion in 1914. One storefront in this building held the Tansey-Crowe Company, a local business that acted as a tires distributor for the Pennsylvania Rubber Company, of Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. The other tire company in this building was a factory branch, that of the Federal Rubber Manufacturing Company, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Vehicular access to the building for tire installation was via an entrance on the alley now named Daniel Burnham Court. These tire companies remained here for ten and eight years, respectively. Integrity is good.

1430-1480 Van Ness Avenue. Among this building's three storefronts, tire shops were present during 1915-1924 and in 1927. This building also held many other auto-related businesses. Integrity is fair.

1650 Pine Street. This building was occupied for ten years, 1917-1927, by the Superior Tire and Repair Company, which sold tires and performed vulcanizing. Superior then moved two doors to the west, to 1660 Pine (also extant), where it did business for another six years.

Of the many tire stores from that period that have been demolished, two are worth mentioning here, if only because they slightly predated all of the above buildings, continued to stand into the 1980s, possessed some architectural interest, and because photographs of them are available. The U. S. Tire Company, at 636 Van Ness, and the Fisk Rubber Company, at 1431 Van Ness, each preceded Goodyear by a year, opening in 1911. U. S. Tire's store looked like a small classical banking temple. Fisk's building had a restrained Italian Renaissance appearance, and a storefront finished with mahogany, grained leather, and hand-painted upper walls and ceiling. It also had a service and

shipping department (behind the storefront), a warehouse in the basement, and a vulcanizing plant in the second story.

Some of the buildings in the study area that held tire shops beginning in the 1920s and 1930s include:

1441 Bush Street. Tire shops performed vulcanizing and retread work here for almost thirty years, from 1922-1951. They were Sherman Braxton (during 1922-1925) and Gene Valla (1927-1951). Integrity is good.

1601 Bush Street. This building was built in 1930 and has been occupied by tire dealers for much, and perhaps all of its existence. Its history has been difficult to research. Tire dealers were definitely here during 1932-1937, 1941-1942, and 1951-1964. Brands sold included Firestone (1951-1953) and Goodyear (1954-1964). The integrity of this building is uncertain.

500 Turk Street. This building has been occupied by Kahn and Keville from its construction in 1935 to the present. They have always sold Goodyear tires, as well as, at times, batteries, radios, and household appliances. Integrity is high.

As one can see from the two lists above, the earlier buildings, from the 1910s, were occupied by tire dealers for ten years or less, while buildings from the 1920s-1930s had much greater longevity of use as tire shops.



1644 Pine Street, built in 1912-1913 and home to the Michelin Tire Company for six years, to 1919.

### Specialized service shops

In addition to general auto repair shops, there were many shops in the study area that offered specialized services. These services included auto painting, auto body building and repair, auto tops and trimming, batteries sales and service, electrical service, auto parts machining, radiators and fenders, brakes, springs, and auto upholstery. Most of these businesses can be considered minor in the larger context of the study area's history, but a few were notable.

*Architecture of specialty service shops*

These buildings were very similar to auto repair shops in their structure and appearance. Like auto repair shops, specialty services shops were almost always made of brick through 1919 and of reinforced concrete thereafter. One or more vehicle entrances figured prominently in the façade, and windows were divided into many lights.

Ornamentation is restrained, but the buildings usually possess pleasing detail and surface texture. 1455 Bush (1913) has a profiled cornice and wall panels formed of recessed brick. 1660 Pine has a profiled cornice and wall panels of brick in a herringbone pattern. 1540 Bush (1916) is notable for a band of wooden windows divided by mullions and muntins into many lights. 42 Twelfth Street (1919) has wooden mezzanine windows divided into many lights.

*Surviving specialty service shops*

The best examples of buildings where specialized services were offered are listed below. (Buildings already mentioned above under multiple-use buildings are not included.)

1455 Bush Street. Built 1913. This was the machine shop of George H. Woodward, who made parts for autos here 1913-1946. Woodward had worked as a machinist in San Francisco since 1902. He worked for Leavitt and Bill in 1904, sold autos on his own in 1907-1908, and owned an auto repair shop in 1910. Integrity is good.

1430-1444 Bush Street. Built 1913. This held the Western Radiator and Fender shop from 1913-1923, an auto painting shop during 1927-1930, Schwerin Brake Service from 1932-1964 (and currently, per signage), and also a muffler shop during 1953-1964. Integrity is harmed by new window sash but is otherwise good.

1540 Bush Street. Built 1916. This building held the Pacific Coast Branch of the Electric Storage Battery Company, of Philadelphia, makers of Exide batteries, from 1916-1926. Exide then moved this branch to the Bayview district. It remains in business today as a worldwide battery manufacturer. This is the most important building in the study area with a history as a battery shop, along with 500 Turk (built much later, in 1935). Integrity is high.

1660 Pine Street. Built 1917. During 1917-1927 this building held the Gould Storage Battery Company; it was later (1927-1935) occupied by a tire shop.

930-980 Van Ness Avenue. Built 1920. An electrical servicing company, the Automotive Service Co., occupied part of this building from 1920-1941. Its president at first was Ernest Ingold, later an important Chevrolet dealer. The window sash has been altered.

1656 Pine Street. Built 1917. An auto tops and trimming shop was here from 1921 to 1929.

42 Twelfth Street. Built 1919. After an earlier use as an auto repair shop, this building was home to Hal Metzel, the Auto Tailor, an auto upholstery business, from 1938 to the present. This building has much better integrity than does another building, 1133 Post, which also held an upholstery business for a similar period.

159 Fell Street. Built 1926. This building held wheel aligning and brake shops and an auto parts manufacturing shop for at least 26 years during the period 1926-1961.



Two brick masonry specialty service shops from the 1910s, both extant. Top photo: 1455 Bush Street, built in 1913 by George H. Woodward as his auto parts machine shop. He remained in business here through 1946. Bottom photo: 1540 Bush Street, built in 1916 for the Electric Storage Battery Co. of Philadelphia, which sold their Exide automobile batteries here through 1926.



Used automobile salesrooms

Numerous buildings in the southern end of the study area had extensive use as salesrooms for used automobiles, and some buildings toward the northern end had some such use, especially during the Depression. In addition, many showrooms where new autos were sold also devoted some of their space to used car sales. The buildings in the study area that had the longest history of this use were:

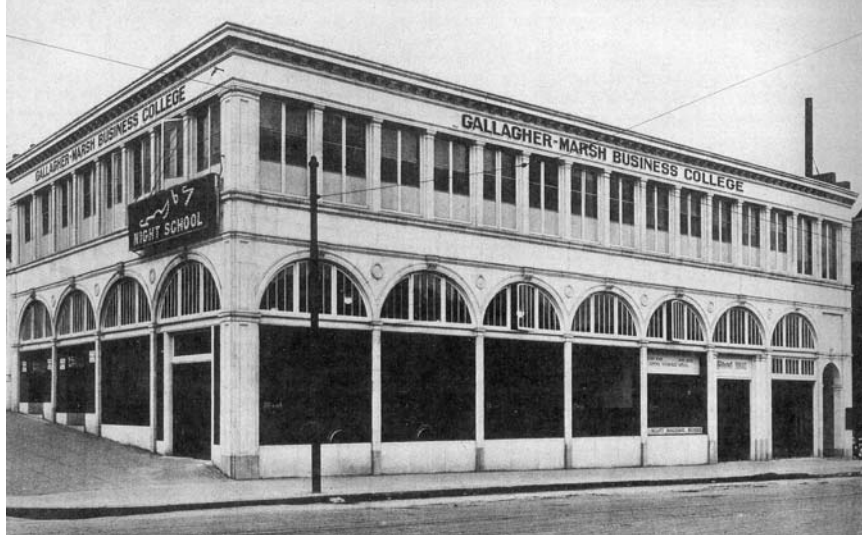
850 Van Ness Avenue. Built 1919. From that date through at least 1964 this building was occupied by used car sales rooms. It is the only building in the study area that was so occupied for many years from the beginning of its history. Two of the dealers here, J. E. French (1927-1936) and Don Gilmore (1937-1938, 1941-1944, 1953), had showrooms for new autos elsewhere in the study area. This building has lost its cornice or pent roof and original window sash on the Van Ness side, and retains these features on its Ellis Street side.

700-710 Van Ness Avenue. Built 1915. After very brief use as a new car showroom, the ground floor of this building was a used car salesroom for over 36 years (1919-1964+). The one long-term occupant was Bank Chevrolet, which sold used cars here 1938-1960. The second floor was first a business college, and later the physical culture and yoga studio of Walt Baptiste (1952-1962). Because its integrity is high, this is the best example of a used car salesroom in the study area.

1415 Van Ness Avenue. Built in 1906 as a clothing store, and devoted to auto uses from 1910 onward. Used car salesrooms occupied this building for 34 years during 1923-1964. Proprietors included William L. Hughson, who was also the city's pre-eminent Ford dealer.



850 Van Ness Avenue (1919). Note the horizontal band which indicates where the pent roof used to be. Window sash have also been altered. This building was a used car salesroom from the time of its construction through at least 1964.



700-710 Van Ness Avenue (William Knowles, architect, 1915). Photo from *The Architect*, March 1916. The first story was devoted to used car sales, while the second story was a business college and later (during 1952-1962) a yoga studio.



From left to right: 826 Van Ness (1918), 820 Van Ness (1920), and 810 Van Ness (1920). By mid-century, signage on used car salesrooms had become unsightly. All three of these buildings have been demolished. Photo from Department of City Planning 1976 survey.

### Alterations and integrity

No automobile-related building in the study area retains 100% integrity; every building has undergone at least some alterations. This section will discuss the most common alterations that have occurred, and what kind of integrity is needed for a building to be able to convey its historic significance.

The most common alteration to buildings, by far, has been the replacement of original vehicle entrance doors by modern roll-up metal doors. The loss of original vehicle doors has been almost universal. Only three buildings still retain such doors. 1565 Bush Street

(1923) has paired metal doors with full-length glazing in the center of the first story. The other two buildings, at 731-799 Van Ness (1917) and 1946-1960 Van Ness (1920), each have two wooden vehicle doors that slide or raise. The five old doors in these three buildings appear to be the only ones in the study area that pre-date World-War II.



Paired vehicle doors with full-length glazing, at 1565 Bush Street. These are the last metal-framed vehicle doors in the Van Ness Avenue corridor.



Two wooden doors at 1946-1960 Van Ness (on the Jackson Street side). One of these opens by raising, the other by sliding on rollers. Another building, at 731-799 Van Ness, also has two wooden vehicle doors.

The next most common type of alteration has been the replacement of original window sash with modern metal sash. Such replacements are harmful to integrity because most windows were originally divided by muntins into many lights, providing pleasing texture to large window openings. Much of this texture has now been lost. Storefront windows often had prism glass in the transom area, and such prism glass has almost universally vanished. One building, 1301-1305 Van Ness, still has a long expanse of prism glass on

its Fern Street side; this is one of the last places one can go to get a sense of what original storefront windows looked like.

Only a small proportion of the auto-related buildings in the study area retain all or almost all of their original window sash. If a building (e.g., 1575-1595 Bush) has lost all of its original sash in the first story, but retains all of its original window sash in the upper stories, it has better than average integrity as far as windows are concerned.

In the past year or two, two buildings in the study area (66 Page and 1831-1849 Van Ness) have removed their original industrial steel window sash, but have replaced that sash with new metal sash that has the same pattern and proportion of lights as the original. The profile and reveal of the new metal sash may not be identical to that of the original, but it is very close. These buildings should be considered to have good integrity after such replacement.

Many buildings have lost varying degrees of ornament. Ornament was an important part of building design before the 1940s, and the loss of any ornament in older buildings is unfortunate. In some buildings this issue is however less important than it is in others. 1831-1849 Van Ness, for example, is a reinforced concrete building whose ornament was originally restricted to the tops of two piers on the Van Ness Avenue side, and a keystone in the main entrance. The skeletal design of this building was its most important aspect, and that remains despite the loss of this ornament. The integrity of this building should be considered to still be good, albeit not high.

1350 Van Ness (built 1912-1913) is an example of a building where ornament was a very important part of the original design, and where a considerable amount of that ornament has been removed. Here, the cornice has been removed, the frieze has been covered up, and the original pedestrian entrance has been altered. Balanced against these losses are the survival of the fluted Corinthian pilasters and the clathri screen in the transom area, and the relative high integrity of the plain service wings facing Bush and Fern streets. In spite of its alterations, this building is still able to convey its history as one of the oldest auto showrooms left standing in the study area, where nationally popular brands (including Stutz) were sold here; because enough of the building survives to evoke its history. In a building that was less old than this one, or where the brands sold were less interesting, the alterations to this building would have resulted in its not being eligible for the California Register.

Many factors must be considered when one considers the integrity of a building, and whether a building can be eligible for the California Register despite a certain level of alterations. An early date of construction, the presence of important auto-related uses in its history, and the longevity of such uses can offset the alterations to a building, up to a certain point. The building should also be compared against other surviving buildings with a similar history. The main question should be: does this building still have the ability to convey its important history? If it does not, even a building that has a compelling history should be considered “not eligible” for the California Register.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

Evaluations of 64 buildings that appear to be eligible for the California Register, either individually or as a contributor to a potential historic district:

The following building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It also appears to be eligible for the California Register under the criteria listed below. It has been given status codes of 1S and 3CS:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Block/lot</u>	<u>Date built</u>	<u>Property type</u>	<u>Criteria</u>
1699 Van Ness Ave.	642/1	1919, 1923	auto showroom	1, 3

The following building was previously found to be a contributor to a potential Hayes Valley Commercial District, under Criterion A of the National Register. This district has been recognized by San Francisco's local government. The building also appears to be individually eligible for the California Register under the criterion given below. It has been given status codes of 3CS and 5D3:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Block/lot</u>	<u>Date built</u>	<u>Property type</u>	<u>Criterion</u>
364 Hayes St.	809/11	1920	public garage	1

The two following buildings appear to be contributors to a potential historic district under Criterion 1 of the California Register, and also appear to be individually eligible for the California Register. The criteria under which they appear to be individually eligible are given at the end of the row. They have been given a Status Code of 3CB:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Block/lot</u>	<u>Date built</u>	<u>Property type</u>	<u>Criteria</u>
1644 Pine St.	647/7	1912-1913	tire and repair shop	1
1670 Pine St.	647/11	1917	auto showroom, shop	1, 3

The three following buildings appear to be contributors to a potential historic district under Criterion 1 of the California Register, but do not appear to be individually eligible. They have been given a Status Code of 3CD:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Block/lot</u>	<u>Date built</u>	<u>Property type</u>
1650 Pine St.	647/8	1917	tire and repair shop
1656 Pine St.	647/9	1917	auto repair shop
1660 Pine St.	647/10	1917	battery and tire shop

The two following buildings appear to be individually eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under the criteria listed below. They are also official City Landmarks of the City and County of San Francisco, and as such should also qualify for the California Register by virtue of this designation. They have been given a Status Code of 3CS:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Block/lot</u>	<u>Date built</u>	<u>Property type</u>	<u>Criteria</u>
901 Van Ness Ave.	719/2	1926-1927	auto showroom	1, 2, 3
1000 Van Ness Ave.	715/5	1920-1921	auto showroom	1, 2, 3

Evaluations of buildings that appear to be eligible for the California Register (continued):

The following 55 buildings appear to be individually eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources, and have been given a Status Code of 3CS:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Block/lot</u>	<u>Date built</u>	<u>Property type</u>	<u>Criteria</u>
1267 Bush St.	279/16	1917-18	public garage	1, 3
1270 Bush/1200 Larkin	278/8	1914	garage	1, 2, 3
1441 Bush St.	670/23	1913	auto repair and tire shop	1
1455 Bush St.	670/20	1913, 1914	machine shop	1, 2
1522-1524 Bush St.	666/6	1916	parts store/repair shop	1, 3
1540 Bush St.	666/6A	1916	battery and repair shop	1, 2, 3
1565 Bush St.	671/7	1923	public garage	1, 3
1765 California St.	647/13, 14	1921, 1927	auto repair shop	1, 2, 3
1745 Clay St.	622/16	1914	public garage	1, 3
730 Ellis St.	717/6	1920	public garage	1
824 Ellis St.	718/6	1920	auto repair shop	1, 3
159 Fell St.	834/15	1926	specialty shop	1
155 Grove St.	811/16	1914-1915	auto repair shop	1
300 Grove St.	792/3	1920	auto repair shop	1, 3
1641 Jackson St.	598/12	1914	public garage	1, 3
1335 Larkin St.	645/3	1913-1914	public garage	1, 3
1349 Larkin St.	645/2	1909-1910	garage, auto repair shop	1, 3
1663-1667 Market St.	3505/44	1920-1921	public garage	1, 3
1500 Mission St.	3506/2	1925/1941	industrial building	3
55 Oak St.	836/7	1929	auto repair shop	1, 3
1650-1660 Pacific Ave.	574/12	1921	public garage	1, 3
66 Page St.	837/8	1924	garage and repair shop	1, 3
1465 Pine St.	668/12	1917	auto repair shop	1
1545 Pine St.	667/16	1906	restaurant, repair shop	1
1700-1710 Pine St.	648/4	1925	public garage	1, 3
650 Polk St.	741/8	1920	auto repair shop	1
730 Polk St./771 Ellis	740/18	1922	auto accessories store	1, 2, 3
843 Polk St.	718/3	1920	auto repair shop	1
845 Polk St.	718/2	1919-1920	auto repair shop	1
1001 Polk St./1000 Geary	694/4	1912-1913	auto showroom	1, 2, 3
1033-1037 Polk St.	694/3	1920	auto parts store	1, 3
1725 Sacramento St.	641/1A	1923	public garage	1, 3
1101 Sutter St.	692/1	1920	school and garage	1
500 Turk St.	741/2	1935	tire and battery shop	1, 3
550 Turk St.	741/5	1924	public garage, shop	1, 3
42 Twelfth St.	3505/5	1919	auto repair shop	1
68 Twelfth St.	3505/9	1912	auto showroom	1, 3
550-590 Van Ness Ave.	766/8	1908-1909	auto showroom	1, 2
700 Van Ness Ave.	742/6	1915	used car salesroom	1, 2, 3
731-799 Van Ness Ave.	743/1	1917, 1925	auto shop and garage	1, 3
800 Van Ness Ave.	739/5	1920	auto showroom	3
999 Van Ness Ave.	719/1, 13	1937	auto showroom	1, 2, 3
1233-1237 Van Ness Av.	690/1A	1913-1914	tire shops, offices	1, 3
1301-1305 Van Ness Av.	671/2	1911-1912	auto showroom	1, 3
1350 Van Ness/1465 Bush	670/16, 19	1912-1913	auto showroom	1
1400 Van Ness Ave.	667/10	1912-1913	auto showroom	1, 3
1412-1420 Van Ness Av.	667/9	1912-1913	tire store, auto showroom	1, 3
1415 Van Ness Ave.	666/4	1906	retail; auto repair, sales	1
1595 Van Ness Ave.	647/1	1913	auto showroom	1, 2

Evaluations of buildings that appear to be eligible for the California Register (continued):

1600 Van Ness Ave.	643/18	1913	auto showroom	1
1625 Van Ness Ave.	642/3	1919-1920	auto showroom	1, 3
1835-1849 Van Ness Av.	618/1, 1B	1921, 1926	auto showroom	1, 2, 3
1946-1960 Van Ness Av.	598/10A	1920	auto showroom	3
2000 Van Ness Ave.	595/5	1909, 1927	medical office bldg	1, 3
2020-2034 Van Ness Av.	595/6	1914	public garage	1

Evaluations of 47 buildings that do not appear to be eligible for the California Register:

The 47 following buildings do not appear to be individually eligible for the California Register, and have been given a status code of 6Z:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Block/lot</u>	<u>Date built</u>	<u>Property type</u>
1348-1380 Bush St.	668/4	1917	battery shop
1361 Bush St.	669/12A	1914	public garage
1425-1433 Bush St.	670/24	1915	auto repair shop
1430-1444 Bush St.	667/5	1913	auto repair shop
1445 Bush St.	670/22	1916	auto repair shop
1601 Bush St.	672/1	1930	tire shop
751 Ellis St.	740/21	1920	repair shop
819 Ellis St.	739/15	1906	stores, garage and shops
840-850 Ellis St.	718/8	1919-1920	public garage
854 Ellis St.	718/9	1920	auto repair shop
899 Ellis St.	739/11	1920	tire store
131 Fell St.	834/19	1929	specialty shop
149 Fell St.	834/17	1919	auto repair shop
155 Fell St.	834/16	1925-1926	specialty shop
165 Fell St.	834/14	1926	specialty shop
24 Franklin St.	836/12	1927	auto repair shop
205 Franklin/210 Fell	816/3	1919-1920	specialty shop
1062 Geary St.	694/9A	1913	auto showroom
1535-1599 Market St.	3506/4	1927	auto showroom
925 O'Farrell St.	718/20	1927	auto accessories store
963 O'Farrell St.	718/17	1924	auto repair shop
38 Otis St.	3505/18	1924	auto repair shop
1560 Pacific Ave.	573/10	1922	auto repair shop
1645-1661 Pacific Ave.	595/13	1923	auto repair shop
1461 Pine St.	668/13	1911	public garage
1528-1540 Pine St.	646/5	1922	auto repair shop
652 Polk St.	741/9	1920	auto repair shop
1045 Polk St.	694/2	1924	machine shop
1932 Polk/1576 Pacific	596/24	ca. 1931	auto repair shop
1055 Post St.	693/21	1919-1920	tire and repair shop
1116 Post St.	691/3	1947	auto showroom annex
1133 Post St.	694/17	1917	used car salesroom*
1143 Post St.	694/15	1917	auto repair shop*
1157 Post St.	694/13	1920	auto showroom, parts store*
1159-1161 Post St.	694/12	1918	auto parts store, shop*

\* The possibility that 1133, 1143, 1157, and 1159-1161 Post St. might contribute to a potential Polk Gulch historic district has not been investigated.

Evaluations of 47 buildings that do not appear to be eligible for the California Register (continued):

690 Van Ness Ave.	763/12	1910	auto showroom
714 Van Ness Ave.	742/7	1913	used car salesroom
850 Van Ness Ave.	739/10	1919	used car salesroom
928 Van Ness Ave.	718/13	1920	auto showroom
950 Van Ness Ave.	718/15, 16	1919	various automotive uses <sup>#</sup>
1395 Van Ness Ave.	671/1	1916, 1948	auto showroom
1430-1480 Van Ness Av.	667/11	1912	auto showroom
1525 Van Ness Ave.	647/3	1912	auto showroom
1730-1750 Van Ness Av.	622/12	1919-1920	auto showroom
1900 Van Ness Ave.	598/9	1919	auto showroom
1940 Van Ness Ave.	598/10B	1921	auto service
2050 Van Ness/1675 Pac.	595/8	1913	auto showroom

Evaluation of one building whose eligibility remains uncertain

The following building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register for its auto-related history. The possibility that it could be eligible for its history as a restaurant cannot be determined until a historic context statement on restaurants in San Francisco has been developed. To reflect this uncertainty, it has been given a status code of 7:

2100 Van Ness Ave.	574/14	1919-1920	auto showroom, restaurant
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**V. AUTO-RELATED BUILDINGS IN THE STUDY AREA THAT HAVE NOT BEEN FORMALLY EVALUATED IN THIS STUDY**

Certain buildings in this study area with a history of automobile use have not been evaluated on DPR 523 forms for various reasons. Those reasons include:

- Most buildings in this group have suffered a loss of integrity so great that they have no potential for eligibility to the California Register.
- Several buildings in this group had an auto-related history that was very brief (six years or less). Some of them may be eligible for the California Register, but if so, they would not be eligible for their auto-related history.
- Two buildings, 1037 Geary and 256 Willow, have had a history only as a hotel garage and private garage; this history is tangential to the purposes of this survey.
- One building in the study area, an auto service station at 1600 Mission, was adequately evaluated in a previous survey.
- One building that is certainly eligible for the California Register, 1575-1595 Bush Street, was approved for demolition about the time this study was commenced.
- The California State Automobile Association (CSAA) buildings at 150 Van Ness, 150 Hayes, and 157-167 Hayes could be evaluated as a complex once the buildings (1957-1969) are 50 years old.

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<sup>#</sup> The possibility that 950 Van Ness might contribute to a potential historic district (along with auto showrooms at 901, 999, and 1000 Van Ness) has not been fully considered in this study.



- One or two buildings were late discoveries.
- Three buildings with auto-related histories, 1501-1519 Mission, 1563-1565 Mission, and 1601 Mission, were not evaluated because they lie just outside the boundaries of this study.

The buildings that were not evaluated are listed below:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Year built</u>	<u>Architect (or builder)</u>	<u>Notes</u>
60 Brady	1925	Axel L. Thulin, bldr	auto use (painting) 1927-1928 only
1575-1595 Bush	1923	Meyer and Johnson	very important example, but demo. apprvd
1600 Bush	1925	A. H. Knoll	Kahn & Keville here 1925-1935, late discvy
1523-25 Franklin	1928	unknown	auto repairs, windshields; about 50% altered
1020-1022 Geary	unknown	unknown	auto use (supplies) 1918-1921 only
1028-1030 Geary	unknown	unknown	auto use (electrical) 1914, 1924-1927 only
1037 Geary	1957	Bruce Heiser	private garage for adjacent Richelieu Hotel
1040-1052 Geary	1920	Joseph L. Stewart	minimal or no auto use; altered
500 Golden Gate	1910	Theo. W. Lenzen	early auto showroom; altered
530 Golden Gate	1911-1912	unknown	originally two bldgs; merged and altered
544 Golden Gate	1911-1912	David C. Coleman	early auto showroom; altered
555 Golden Gate	pre-1912	unknown	early auto showroom; altered
150 Hayes	1967-1968	Albert Roller	CSAA annex; late construction date
157/167 Hayes	1958-1959	Albert Roller	CSAA garage; see also 150 Van Ness
1610 Jackson	1908	unknown	Jerome (later Sherwood) Garage; altered
1530-40 Market	1920	Reid Brothers	Clydesdale trucks, Olds; altered or replaced
1501-19 Mission	1927, 1930	Hy Peterson, NB Green	Gurley-Lord Tire Co.; outside of boundaries
1563-65 Mission	1916-1917	MacDonald and Kahn	Goodyear Tire, 1917-23; outside boundaries
1600 Mission	1930	Blaine and Olson	McKale's Srvc 1930-60s; already evaluated
1601 Mission	1931	engin'r'g dept of owner	Tire Service Co. 1931-64; alt; out. boundries
150 Oak	1948	unknown	Division of Highways HQ (tangential use)
895 O'Farrell	1924	unknown	E. Hanni and Co. auto repair; late discvy; alt
30-32 Otis	1931	E. H. Denke	auto use (repairs) in 1934 only
50-60 Otis	unknown	unknown	auto use (garage, tires) 1924-1927 only
1544-46 Pacific	1925	J. C. Hladik	auto use (radiators) 1927-1933 only; altered
1454-1466 Pine	unknown	unknown	auto use beg. 1937; altered
1470 Pine	1921	MacDonald and Kahn	auto repair use 1921-1936; altered
601 Turk	1913	Hladik and Thayer	early auto showroom; altered
90-98 Twelfth St.	unknown	unknown	altered
30 Van Ness	1908	MacDonald & Applegarth	White Garage and showroom, altered 1964
150 Van Ness	1925	George Kelham	CSAA; altered 1969; see 150 & 157 Hayes
214 Van Ness	1917	MacDonald and Kahn	early Ford showroom; altered
234 Van Ness	1911	none	early motorcycle showroom; altered 1963
540 Van Ness	ca. 1908	unknown	early auto showroom (Lozier, etc.); altered
1100 Van Ness	1912-1913	C. A. Meussdorffer	early auto showroom (Reo, etc.); altered
1200 Van Ness	1911	MacDonald & Applegarth	auto showroom for H. O. Harrison; altered
1243-5 Van Ness	1913-1914	David C. Coleman	brief auto use only; a pair with #1233-1237, which is eligible for its architecture
1560 Van Ness	1917	unknown	Hupmobile and Pontiac showroom; altered
1701 Van Ness	1917	MacDonald and Kahn	early Oldsmobile showroom; altered
1801 Van Ness	1919-1920	Samuel L. Hyman	auto showroom to 1927; altered or replaced
1920 Van Ness	1918	Rousseau and Rousseau	two old auto buildings merged and altered
1930 Van Ness	1922	Samuel L. Hyman	early Duesenberg showroom; altered
2001 Van Ness	1919-1920	MacDonald and Kahn	early Lincoln showroom; altered
256 Willow	1932	Charles E. J. Rogers	has a history of use as a private garage only

## **VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Research sources for auto showrooms, public garages, auto repair shops, etc., on the construction of individual buildings, and on the occupants of these buildings:

*Building and Industrial News* (later, *Building and Engineering News*), beginning in 1911. Useful for announcements of proposed buildings and abstracts of building contracts.

Crocker-Langley City Directory for San Francisco (later known as Polk's Crocker-Langley). Both the classified section of these directories and the main (front) listings were consulted to determine the occupants of these buildings and the years each occupant was present. These listings usually, but did not always, list the brands of automobiles that were sold in the showrooms, and the proprietors of the businesses.

Department of Building Inspection, 1650 Mission Street. For building permits.

l'Hommedieu, R. R. "The Evolution of Auto Row." In the *San Francisco Newsletter*, Christmas number, 1913. This article outlined the development of the auto industry in San Francisco to that date. At the California Historical Society (CHS).

Marriott, F. A. "The Automobile," *San Francisco Newsletter*, Christmas Number, 1903 (at CHS).

Pacific Telegraph and Telephone cross directories for 1927, 1933, 1940, and 1946. At CHS and the San Francisco History Center, Main Library (SFPL). Occupants of buildings are listed by address in these directories.

Pacific Telegraph and Telephone yellow pages for the 1930s-1960s. At SFPL. The classifieds of these phone books sometimes give more information than the city directories do.

Sanborn insurance maps:

1913, at SFPL

1928-1936, at CHS

1948-1951, at SFPL

1964, at CHS

These maps indicate the structural type of each building through color coding and the general use of each building. The capacity of public garages is often given.

*San Francisco Chronicle*, as indexed by the ProQuest website, and accessed via the SFPL website. 1900-1922. Other newspaper articles can be found in the files for individual buildings at San Francisco Heritage.

Wikipedia entries for automobile, tire, and battery brands. In a few instances minor discrepancies were found among various Wikipedia entries. Due to time constraints it was not possible to check this information against other sources.

For citations to specific newspaper articles, please see the references section in DPR 523 forms for the individual buildings in this survey. Much of the material in this report's historic context was assimilated from these articles. Other conclusions were drawn from sorted data on the buildings in this survey.

For historic photographs:

*Architect and Engineer*, beginning in 1909. Photos of several buildings in the study area could be found in this periodical.

Department of City Planning. The Department's 1976 survey of historic buildings and its Van Ness Avenue Plan of the 1980s yielded many photos of buildings from these decades.

l'Hommedieu, R. R. "The Evolution of Auto Row." In the *San Francisco Newsletter*, Christmas number, 1913 (at CHS). Photo montages of dozens of auto showrooms and related buildings was published in this issue.

San Francisco History Center, Main Library, photographs collection. Many buildings in this survey are represented in the library's collection of Assessor's negatives. Street views and photos of some individual buildings are available through the library's website.



Cornice detail, 1400 Van Ness Avenue