

V.E. Wood Auto Building
315 State Street
Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara County
California

HABS No. CA-2215

HABS
CAL,
42-SANBA,
25-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, CA 94102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

V.E. WOOD AUTO BUILDING HABS No. CA-2215

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Location: 315 State Street, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, California (southwest corner State Street and State Highway 101).
USGS Santa Barbara, Calif. Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 11.252538.3811290

Present Owner: Vincent E. Wood, 1920 Gibraltar Road, Santa Barbara CA 93105

Present Occupant: Gregg Motors Ltd.

Present Use: BMW, Rolls Royce, Maserati auto dealership & repairs.

Significance: The building at 315 State Street, Santa Barbara, is a successful example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, here used in the context of an automobile dealership and repair garage. It was determined eligible for the National Register on May 9, 1978, significant under Criterion C.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Constructed in 1922, and altered to the Spanish Colonial Revival style ca. 1926, the building at 315 State Street, Santa Barbara has served continuously as an automobile dealership, with showroom, offices, and attached repair garage. From 1922 until 1955, the building housed the Buick dealership of Vincent E. Wood. The original style of the building is not known, nor is the architect, if any. The builder was J.Y. Parker, a local brick contractor for whom adjacent Parker Way was named. The building was altered in 1926, assuming the Spanish Colonial style at that time. The choice of the Spanish Colonial Revival style had its roots in Santa Barbara planning which began in the period immediately following World War I.

The City had hired Bertram Goodhue to plan a commercial streetscape in an Hispanic or Mediterranean style. *Architect and Engineer*, in a 1919 article, noted "These buildings will not follow ordinarily commercial lines, but will be set back of the street line and will have patios, corridors and covered walks." This effort was followed closely by a competition for a new courthouse/city hall, the winning design for which was precisely in this mode. Santa Barbara thus began a conscious effort to visually link its own architectural past with the present. In the period 1921 to 1925, Santa Barbara architects, along with the Community Drafting Room, and Allied Architectural Association of Los Angeles put together exhibitions of drawings setting forth conceptions for the rebuilding of entire blocks of State Street along these lines. First to become reality was the El Paseo complex by architect James Osborne Craig, in 1921-22. Other buildings followed as the city began to assume a distinctly Hispanic flavor.

The 1925 earthquake, which heavily damaged or destroyed most of the city's 19th century Victorian commercial buildings, provided the catalyst for full-scale rebuilding in a homogeneous Hispanic mode. It is likely, therefore, that the 1926 remodeling of the Vincent E. Wood Buick dealership was in direct response to earthquake and that the selection of style was consistent with this strong local trend.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The 1930 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Santa Barbara, Volume I, reveals the building to be of fireproof construction, with a concrete floor, concrete columns, hollow tile interior pilasters, and a tile roof. A frame partition between concrete posts and girders divided the sales showroom and office area ^{from} the service and repair area. The roof of the service and repair area is carried on steel trusses.

The facade was altered to the Spanish Colonial Revival style ca. 1926. This remodeling likely was made in connection with repairs to the building following the 1925 Santa Barbara earthquake. As remodeled, the building presented a facade of two-story arches, six bays wide along State Street, and three bays wide on the gable ends along Parker Way and West Montecito Street. All fenestration was set in deep reveals in reference to the area's adobe architectural past. Windows within the arches were divided horizontally at the spring line of the arches, with tripartite vertical division; large display windows filled the lower half, while the upper portion was set in small multiple panes. Four gabled dormers with balconettes faced State Street, while the gable ends sported deeply set *oeil de boeuf* attic vents covered with wrought iron grillwork. The roof, clad in Mission tiles, had tightly clipped eaves.

In 1946, the construction of State Highway 2 (now State Highway 101) along the alignment of Montecito Street required the demolition of the southern half of the building, bringing it to its present form. The work was performed by contractor Harold J. Vaile. Only the two northernmost bays facing State Street remain; the third (now southernmost) bay was carried around in a curve transitioning to the new south facade facing Highway 101. [While State Street runs generally northwest-southeast, for the purposes of this report it is assumed to run north-south.] Column capitals were simplified, and the upper portions of the arches along State Street were infilled; those along Parker Way were replaced by mezzanine-level rectangular fenestration with a decidedly horizontal emphasis, containing inward-hinged pivotal windows. Now half its original width, the one-story service area remains, as originally, west of the sales area, with entry from Parker Way.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

City of Santa Barbara Building Permits C-1335 dated February 1946; C-1473 dated April 1946; F-214 dated July 1952.

R. Conard & C.H. Nelson, *Santa Barbara: A Guide to El Pueblo Viejo*, Santa Barbara, 1986.

G. Ruggerone, et al, "Final Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Crosstown Freeway on Highway 101 through the City of Santa Barbara From Salispuedes Overhead to Castillo Street Interchange," SCH Number 75031148, California Department of Transportation, Sacramento, June 15, 1984.

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D. Gebhard, B. Zarakow, D. Andrews, "Santa Barbara Crosstown Freeway Historical Properties Inventory," California Department of Transportation, Sacramento, May 14, 1976.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Santa Barbara, California, 1930, 1930-50.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The proposed project will provide a four-lane, divided, ground-level freeway along the existing Highway 101 corridor through the city of Santa Barbara. Two streets--Garden and State--would be separated to cross under the freeway. A full diamond interchange will be constructed at Garden Street.

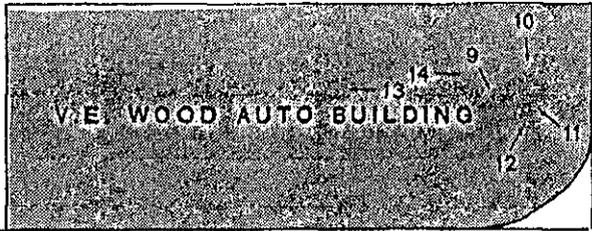
The project is designed to enhance traffic circulation in Santa Barbara with only minor disturbance. The elimination of four signalized, at-grade intersections on existing Highway 101 will reduce accidents, fuel and energy consumption, air pollution, and traffic delay.

Construction of the State Street undercrossing will necessitate demolition of the showroom portion of the V.E. Wood Auto Building. The alignment of State Street at this point will be shifted slightly to the west in order to avoid impacts to a more significant historic building at 324-330 State Street. Were the State Street undercrossing constructed on the present alignment, it would require the demolition of *both* the V.E. Wood Auto Building and the building at 324-330 State Street. A new northeast facade will be constructed for the portion of the building remaining.

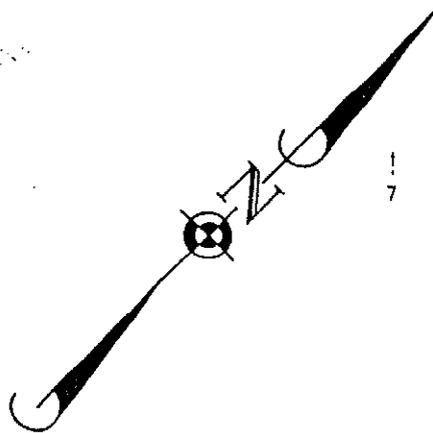
Historian: John W. Snyder
Chief Architectural Historian
California Department of Transportation
Office of Environmental Analysis
1120 N Street
Sacramento CA 95814

MOTOR WAY

PARKER WAY



STATE HIGHWAY 101 8



STATE STREET

MONTECITO

Site map showing camera locations, directions of view.
Traced from Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Santa Barbara,
1930, V.1. Approximate scale: 1"=50'.