United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

   historic name: Howard Motor Company Building

   other names/site number: Acura of Pasadena, California Custom Coach, Inc., Howard Automotive Company

2. Location

   street & number: 1285 E. Colorado Boulevard

   city or town: Pasadena

   state: California code CA county: Los Angeles code 037 zip code: 91106

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets or does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally, statewide, or locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

   Signature of certifying official/Title: [Signature]

   Date: 3/15/96

   State of Federal agency and bureau: California Office of Historic Preservation

4. National Park Service Certification

   I hereby certify that the property is:

   X entered in the National Register.
   [ ] See continuation sheet.

   [ ] determined eligible for the National Register
   [ ] See continuation sheet.

   [ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

   [ ] removed from the National Register.

   [ ] other, (explain:)

   Signature of the Keeper: [Signature]

   Date of Action: 4/19/96
Howard Motor Company Building

Los Angeles County, California

Name of Property

5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ private</td>
<td>☑ building(s)</td>
<td>buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ public-local</td>
<td>site</td>
<td>sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ public-State</td>
<td>structure</td>
<td>structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ public-Federal</td>
<td>object</td>
<td>objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Functions</th>
<th>Current Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store</td>
<td>COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Classification</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS</td>
<td>foundation CONCRETE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival</td>
<td>walls STUCCO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>roof ASPHALT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other CONCRETE/Cast Stone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet(s).
Howard Motor Company Building
Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

DESCRIPTION

The Howard Motor Company Building is a two-story, concrete and brick, Spanish Colonial Revival-style commercial building with a high-style, richly ornamented automobile showroom at the street and an attached utilitarian service garage behind. The showroom interior, also richly ornamented, is visible from the street through expansive plate glass windows and entry doors. The building was constructed in 1927 by the Austin Company of California, architects and contractors, for the Howard Motor Company. The building remains virtually unaltered from its 1927 appearance, both on the exterior and in the significant interior spaces.

Automobile Showroom

The richly ornamented double-height showroom fronts directly on East Colorado Boulevard and has a smooth cement plaster finish exterior with a central and substantial cast stone Churriguereesque ornament, decorative chamfered corners, and a broad ornamental frieze. The showroom windows and entry doors are recessed in a single elliptical arch which spans the entire street facade. The arch has a grooved cast stone head mold that terminates in unusual scrolled imposts. The east elevation of the showroom also has an elliptical-arched window, but without the head mold. The central entry doors are marked by decorative cast iron piers and a dividing panel between the doors and transom: original wrought iron grillwork over the doors and transom has been removed. The showroom windows have high cement bulkheads with decorative metalwork along the flat sills. Some of the original dividing bars and copper windows stops have been replaced with a new metal framing system.

The theatrical Churriguereesque ornament, marking the entry, dominates the entire street facade, extending from the top of the elliptical arch to the parapet: the ornament has tripartite divisions and incorporates elaborate mythical figures and faces, shells, medallions. Arabesque ornament and scrollwork, four urn-shaped finials, and a central rondel window with a fish-scale screen, all in high relief. The ornamental frieze wraps around the remainder of the front and sides of the showroom, with two cast stone moldings separated by a gridded field of small rosettes with medallions and ornamental plaques. The flat portion of the chamfered corners also has ornamental plaques. The roof is screened from view by the parapet. A large projecting cabinet sign has been added to the western end of the street facade.

Showroom Interior

The showroom interior is a rectangular-plan two-story space with painted unfinished concrete walls, a red tile floor, and an exposed wood truss roof of elaborately carved heavy timber trusses with metal straps and exposed cross-bracing. The rear wall of the showroom has a symmetrical two-story elevation divided into five bays by floor-to-ceiling pilasters and three curvilinear arches, with a series of entrances, alcoves, and balconets connecting to offices on the ground floor and mezzanine levels, and the service garage beyond. Decorative features include a series of cast stone panels with coats of arms, piers with cast stone capitals supporting the...
Howard Motor Company Building  
Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

mezzanine level, a flight of stairs to the mezzanine level with ceramic tile risers, mezzanine railings with cast stone fish-scale screens, wrought iron railings and grillwork, and two large elaborate chandeliers with gilding and metal tin work suspended from the ceiling. Portions of the rear of the mezzanine level, originally open, have been infilled with private offices and the entry between the showroom and the garage has been narrowed.

Service Garage

The attached two-story service garage is L-shaped in plan and fronts on a side street, North Chester Avenue. The street elevation of the service garage has a smooth cement plaster finish exterior, while the secondary elevations have a painted unfinished concrete exterior. Banks of fixed, multi-pane metal windows with operable awning sections and plain concrete sills divide the service garage elevations into bays. Metal security bars have been added to the lower-level windows. Entrances to both levels of the service garage are directly off the side street, with the lower level devoted to open service bays and the upper level to open parking and storage. The upper-level is supported by squat concrete columns with simple flared capitals and open to a steel truss and wood roof. The roof of the building is screened from view by the parapet.
## Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- **X** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

- Property is:
  - **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
  - **B** removed from its original location.
  - **C** a birthplace or grave.
  - **D** a cemetery.
  - **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
  - **F** a commemorative property.
  - **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

**COMMERCE**

**ARCHITECTURE**

### Period of Significance

1927-1944

### Significant Dates

1927

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion A is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Austin Company of California (Architect/Builder)

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # 

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Name of repository:**

Design & Historic Preservation Archives

CITY OF PASADENA/Planning & Permitting Dept.
Howard Motor Company Building
Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

SIGNIFICANCE

The Howard Motor Company Building, constructed in 1927, is locally significant for its associations with the historic context. “Marketing and Servicing the Automobile (1902-1944),” under Criterion A in the area of Commerce and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a locally significant example of the automobile showroom and the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The automobile industry in Pasadena, including the manufacturing as well as the marketing and servicing of the automobile, was an important segment of the local economy in the interwar years and had a profound impact on everyday life. The automobile showroom is important in the introduction and surge in automobile ownership in Pasadena for its role in promoting and servicing the early automobile. The Howard Motor Company Building has been in use as an automobile showroom since its construction in 1927 for the Howard Motor Company up to the present day.

The building remains virtually unaltered from its historic appearance, both on the exterior and in the significant interior spaces, and is one of the best and most intact examples of the automobile showroom in Pasadena. The building meets the registration requirements identified for automobile showrooms for “Early Automobile-Related Properties in Pasadena (1897-1944).” Distinct characteristics of the building, typical of its property type, include: a Period Revival, high-style showroom exterior and interior, with a theatrical use of design and ornamentation, for increased commercial identification and to establish an attractive setting for the automobile models on display; an expansive use of plate glass windows and entry doors extending across the entire Colorado Boulevard facade, permitting complete visibility and access to the showroom directly from the street; and a large, attached, utilitarian service garage at the rear of the building, with direct access to the side street, for servicing and support of automobile sales. The building is an accomplished example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, evident in its distinctive Churrigueresque facade and richly ornamented showroom interior.

Historical Background

In the interwar years, most of the automobile dealerships in Pasadena were located on Colorado Boulevard (then Colorado Street), and primarily in one of two groupings or so-called “auto rows”: a two block stretch of West Colorado Boulevard, between Orange Grove Boulevard and the downtown; and several blocks of East Colorado Boulevard, between Lake and Hill Avenues, in the then-geographic center of the city and at the edge of the eastward-expanding downtown. The Howard Motor Company Building was one of the several automobile dealerships and auto-related buildings located within a few blocks of each other along this stretch of East Colorado Boulevard.

With the considerable growth in the automobile industry in Pasadena and the need for larger and “more modern” facilities, automobile dealerships were typically at a particular location for only a few years before moving to other facilities: consequently, the individual auto showrooms were used by several different dealerships. The Howard Motor Company Building was built in 1927 for the Howard Motor Company (later called the Howard
Howard Motor Company Building
Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

Automotive Company), a Buick dealership which had outgrown its facilities at 267 W. Colorado Boulevard (built 1917, significantly altered 1946). In 1938, the Howard Automotive Company moved to the Kindel Building at 1095 East Colorado Boulevard, just a few blocks away; and the Bush-Morgan Motor Company, a Packard dealership, moved from the Kindel Building to the auto showroom the Howard Motor Company had built and was leaving. The Bush-Morgan Motor Company (later the Morgan Motor Company) continued to occupy the building well into the 1950s. The building is still used as an automobile showroom today.
Howard Motor Company Building
Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


Building Permit #4537D. City of Pasadena. March 5, 1927.


Pacific Coast Architect, September 1, 1928. p. 29.

Howard Motor Company Building

Name of Property

Los Angeles County, California

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  less than an acre 

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 Zone: 111   1 9.6 4.7 0  3 7 7 8.7 6.0
   Easting:   1 4 7.0
   Northing:   3 7 7 8.7 6.0

2 Zone: 111   1 9.6 4.7 0  3 7 7 8.7 6.0
   Easting:   1 4 7.0
   Northing:   3 7 7 8.7 6.0

3 Zone: 111   1 9.6 4.7 0  3 7 7 8.7 6.0
   Easting:   1 4 7.0
   Northing:   3 7 7 8.7 6.0

4 Zone: 111   1 9.6 4.7 0  3 7 7 8.7 6.0
   Easting:   1 4 7.0
   Northing:   3 7 7 8.7 6.0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title  Brian Goeken, AICP, Planner: Design & Historic Preservation Section/Planning Division

organization  CITY OF PASADENA/Planning & Permitting Dept. date  9/28/95 rev. 1 12/96

street & number  Hale Building, 175 N. Garfield Ave. telephone  (818) 405-4228

city or town  Pasadena state  CA zip code  91109-7215

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

( Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name  Frank Naiman, et. al.; Naiman Pasadena Partnership

street & number  2012 N. Normandie Ave. telephone  (213) 662-1350

city or town  Los Angeles state  CA zip code  90027

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
Howard Motor Company Building
Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is Parcel Number 5738-021-018.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the entire city parcel that historically has been associated with the property.
Howard Motor Company Building
Pasadena, Los Angeles County, CA

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: City of Pasadena (Brian D. Goeken)
Date of Photographs: September 1995
Location of Original Negatives: Design & Historic Preservation Archives
                  CITY OF PASADENA/Planning & Permitting Department

Description of Views:

1. Automobile Showroom and Attached Service Garage: Colorado Boulevard (south) and east elevations.
2. Automobile Showroom: Colorado Boulevard elevation (primary facade).
6. Service Garage: Chester Street (west) elevation.
7. Service Garage: rear (north) elevation.
REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Howard Motor Company Building
NAME:

MULTIPLE Early Automobile-Related Properties in Pasadena MPS
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Los Angeles

DATE RECEIVED: 3/20/96 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/02/96
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/18/96 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/04/96
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 96000422

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Howard Motor Company Building is significant under NR Criteria A and C (Commerce and Architecture) as a well-preserved local example of the automobile showroom property type, which emerged as a significant building form in Pasadena during the early growth and expansion years of the "automobile era." The handsome concrete and stucco Spanish Colonial Revival-style building features a theatrically decorated street elevation designed to both capture the attention of passing consumers and reflect the status and excitement of new automobile ownership.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A+C

REVIEWER Paul R. Lusignan DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE __________________ DATE 4/10/96

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N