

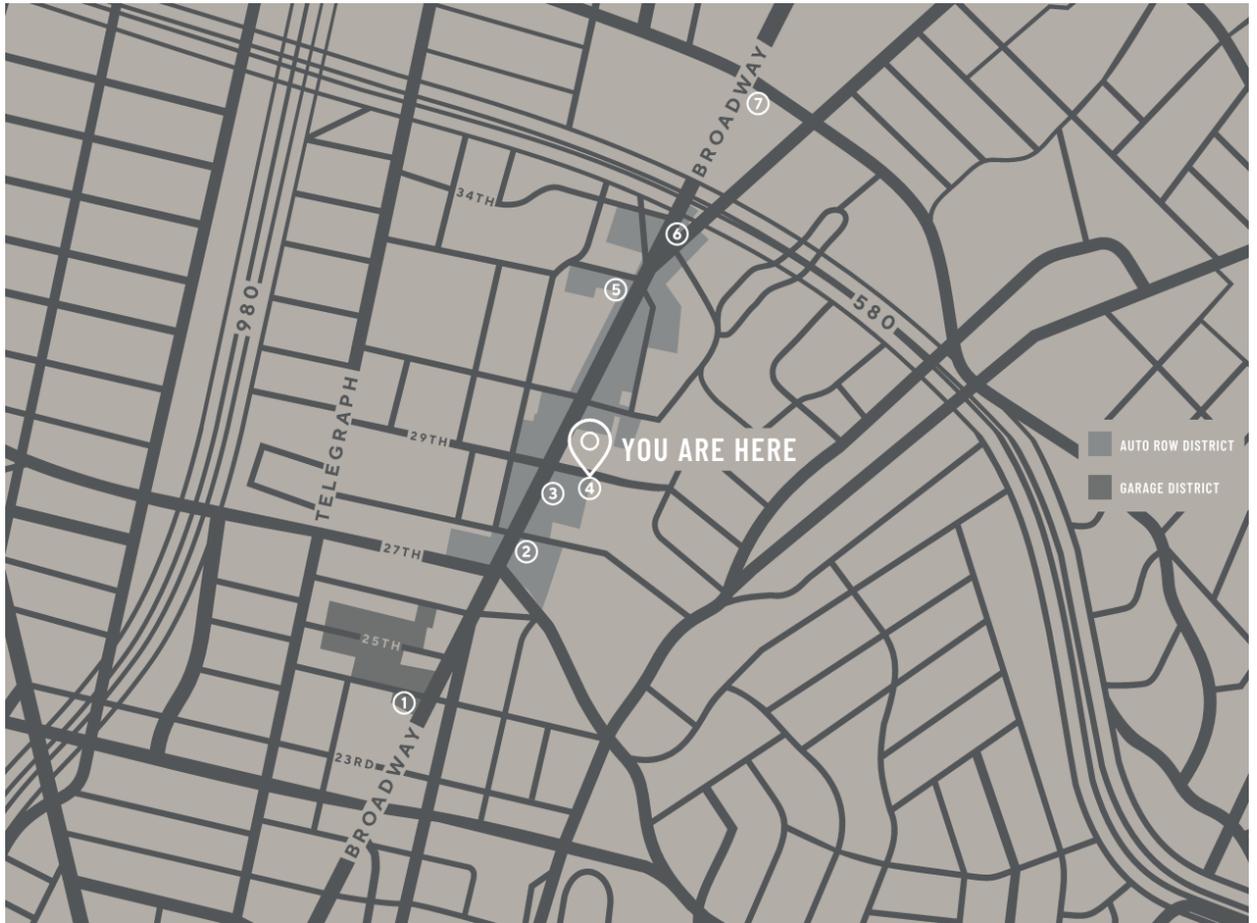
Oakland's Upper Broadway Auto Row

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Automobiles and Architecture: Past and Present

Oakland's Upper Broadway Auto Row, along the 2000s and 3000s blocks of Broadway, has historic roots dating back to the early 1900s. Two historic districts (shown on the map) exemplify characteristic Auto Row businesses and building types: showrooms along Broadway, and service and repair garages on the side streets. The district has evolved over the last century, experiencing automotive business openings, closures, and re-openings, historic buildings being adapted and re-purposed for new life, and new buildings being built, ushering in a new era of work, live and play. Today, the district is a contemporary and flourishing part of the city that is made unique by its automotive origins and architectural history.

Map of Selected Locations



2355 Broadway (Location #1)



The four-story Cuyler Lee Packard and Maxwell salesroom and garage building was built in 1913 in the Beaux-Arts style of the time. It was designed by architecture firm Willis Polk & Co. The building is part of the 25th Street Garage District which is notable for its concentrated and distinctive set of 1910s-1920s one-story garage buildings. The Cuyler Lee building was unique then and remains so now, due to its grand scale and style, in contrast to its more utilitarian counterparts.

Luxury automobiles such as the Packard were sold and serviced out of this prestigious building. In 1924, Western Auto Supply Company purchased the building as its flagship store, regional warehouse, and district offices. From 1947 through 1977, the building was home to MacFarlane's Candy Company's headquarters and factory. Later, it was reclaimed for automotive uses by the Val Strough automotive dealership. In 2008, the building was adapted into 24 live-work lofts known as the Packard Lofts. The building exterior retains its original design, architecture, and materials, with modifications limited to the storefront entries on the ground floor.

TOP PHOTO

The Observer, April 8, 1916 via *Broadway Valdez Specific Plan* pages 179-186,
<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/report/oak043035.pdf>

BOTTOM PHOTO

Anton DevCo, 2021

CAPTION

Broadway Valdez Specific Plan
Oakland Wiki,

[localwiki.org/oakland/Cuyler Lee Packard and Maxwell Salesroom and Garage Building](http://localwiki.org/oakland/Cuyler_Lee_Packard_and_Maxwell_Salesroom_and_Garage_Building)
Madison Park, madisonpark.com/bro.html

2740 Broadway (Location #2)



The Pacific Nash Motor Company auto salesroom and garage was built in 1929 in an Art Deco style, designed by architect John Donovan, best known as a designer of schools and civic buildings. The Pacific Nash building is a tall two stories, with a straight parapet with decorated pilaster caps, brick exterior walls, terra cotta ornament, and large display windows. It has experienced some minor alterations during its 90+ year history but remains predominantly intact and consistent with its original design and construction. In 2021 the property is still in automotive use, operated by Volkswagen of Oakland, which is a family-owned company that has been in business for 30 years.

PHOTO

Anton DevCo, 2021

CAPTION

Broadway Valdez Specific Plan pages 44 and 86-87,
<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/report/oak043035.pdf>
Volkswagen of Oakland, <https://vwfoakland.com/about-us>
University of Washington Library / Pacific Coast Architecture Database,
<http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/17380/>

2820 Broadway (Location #3)



2820 Broadway was a Beaux Arts derivative showroom and service garage designed by architects Richardson & Burrell and built in 1916 by Sommarstrom Brothers. The building was originally owned and developed by Harry Grey and originally operated as a Ford dealership and garage run by E.I. Veitch. Don Neher was a salesman for E.I. Veitch and in 1922, he bought E.I. Veitch's interests in the business and continued dealing Ford vehicles under his own name. Photos of E.I. Veitch and Don Neher are included in the 1923 *Oakland Tribune* ad, above left. By 1936 (top right), the garage was operated as a Pontiac dealership by Daniels Wells, Inc.

In 2021 (bottom right), the property was redeveloped into a residential use, with 171 units of new construction above and behind. The original building façade remains, incorporated in the project. The Beaux Arts details, including its peaked parapet with dentils, pilaster and bay composition, storefront with transom, and glazed brick exterior, remain faithful to the original design and construction from over 100 years ago.

LEFT PHOTO

Oakland Tribune, September 9, 1923 via *Oakland Wiki*,
[localwiki.org/oakland/Don Neher Motors/ files/Oakland Tribune Sun Sep 9 1923%20-%20ad.jpg/ info/](http://localwiki.org/oakland/Don_Neher_Motors/files/Oakland_Tribune_Sun_Sep_9_1923%20-%20ad.jpg/info/)

TOP RIGHT PHOTO

General Motors Photostore, 1936,
gmphotostore.com/1936-daniels-wells-pontiac-oakland-poster/

BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTO

Anton DevCo, 2021

CAPTION

Oakland Tribune via *Newspapers.com*, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/56570196/don-neher-ford-2820-broadway/>
Broadway Valdez Specific Plan,
<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/report/oak043035.pdf>

295 29th Street (Location #4)



The automotive history of 295 29th Street began in 1917 when an automotive repair shop was built. Known as the Hardy-J.E. French Co. building for its original owner and an early occupant, it was a representative example of an early 20th century utilitarian service garage. The original owner and developer was Mary Louise Hardy. The architect, if any, is unknown. Sommarstrom Brothers were the contractors who built and likely designed the building, along with a number of other buildings in the district.

As seen in the 1992 photo (top left) from the Broadway-Valdez Specific Plan and in 2018, it was typical of the small garages on the side streets along Auto Row, where they supported the grander Broadway showrooms. It was a plain utilitarian design, one story, with brick and clay tile walls, concrete floor, truss roof, skylights, and large windows. A fine cluster of these buildings west of Broadway is identified as the 25th Street Garage District.

The building at 295 29th Street underwent a number of changes and renovations over its 101 years, but it remained in automotive use as a garage and parts shop during its existence and was most recently operated as Collision Repair by Brooks. The building was demolished in 2019 to make way for a new use.

In 2019, construction began on the new building which is now home to 91 residences. The architecture of the new building (right photo, 2021) utilizes features characteristic of the original building and of Oakland's Upper Broadway Auto Row, which include large front windows, transom windows, and zero front setbacks.

TOP LEFT PHOTO

Broadway Valdez Specific Plan pages 174-175,

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/report/oak043035.pdf>

BOTTOM LEFT PHOTO

Anton DevCo, 2018

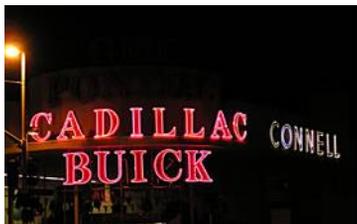
RIGHT PHOTO

Anton DevCo, 2021

CAPTION

Broadway Valdez Specific Plan pages 174-175

3093 Broadway (Location #5)



In The Motor World

By TOM McCABE
Tribune Auto Editor

CONNELL MOTORS OPENS \$500,000 BUILDING

The new half-million dollar establishment of the Connell Motor Company, Broadway Oldsmobile dealer, was formally opened in the public yesterday. Civic and business leaders, public officials and newsmen of the Bay area were above a preview of the new building Friday night.

Automobile executives and technicians described the building as one of the nation's finest automobile establishments. The building occupies the block between Broadway and Webster Street on Hawthorne; Georgia Kaufman, who has been associated with Connell more than 20 years, is service manager; Ed Elder, long identified with the firm, is sales manager; Henry A. Piekard is office manager; Clarence St. John, parts manager.

In presenting the new building to his guests Friday night, W. A. Connell paid special tribute to Christensen and Lynek, the contractors, and Alton Pizzara, architect. Connell Motor Company is second in the United States in point of sales of Oldsmobile automobiles.



The 3093 Broadway showroom and garage was built in 1946 for Connell Motors. It was designed by architect Alben Froberg in the Streamline Moderne style of architecture. The showroom had full height storefront windows, a rounded corner, black tile base, and terrazzo floors. Its opening was featured in the *Oakland Tribune* on May 24, 1947 (bottom left). The neon on the tower was reworked over the years with changing General Motors brand names, and was irresistible to photographers, including roadside architecture websites Roadside Peek and Roadside Architecture.

The property was redeveloped in 2019 and is now 435 residential apartments with retail space on the ground floor. The north corner of the new building incorporates the shell of the original showroom with its prominent rounded corner, wraparound windows, and bold signage.

TOP LEFT PHOTO

Roadside Peek courtesy of Scott Strickland, date unknown,

<http://www.roadsidepeek.com/roadusa/southwest/california/nocal/nocalauto/nocalautodealer/index2.htm>

BOTTOM LEFT PHOTO

Oakland Tribune, May 24, 1947 via *Oakland Wiki*,

https://localwiki.org/oakland/Connell_GMC_Pontiac_Cadillac

TOP RIGHT PHOTO

Roadside Architecture, 2008, <https://www.roadarch.com/showrooms/ca4.html>

BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTO

Anton DevCo, 2021

CAPTION

Broadway Valdez Specific Plan pages 48 and 147,

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/report/oak043035.pdf>

3330 Broadway (Location #6)



3330 Broadway is historically known as the Eisenback-Stroug showroom building. It was built in 1917 and was designed by architects Falch & Knoll. A one-story flatiron building, this early 20th century Beaux Arts showroom reflects Beaux Arts and Arts and Crafts influences in its striking exterior covered in dark red brick with marble inlays. It has continued to be used for automotive purposes since it was built. From 1937 through 1993 it was operated as a Chevrolet dealership by Val Stroug, and since then has been operated by Honda as a showroom.

PHOTO

Anton DevCo, 2021

CAPTION

Broadway Valdez Specific Plan page 39

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/report/oak043035.pdf>

3600 Broadway (Location #7)



The Kaiser-Frazer Corporation built a one-of-a-kind turntable showroom in 1947 at the intersection of MacArthur and the 3600 block of Broadway. The showroom held a single car on a turntable inside the building and another car on the roof. It was apparently much photographed though short-lived. The website localwiki.org/oakland/Kaiser-Frazer_dealerships has assembled several other versions of this c.1952 photo.

The Kaiser-Frazer partnership was founded in 1945 by shipbuilder and heavy construction magnate Henry Kaiser and automotive veteran Joseph Frazer. The Kaiser-Frazer venture was established to satisfy pent up demand for civilian automobiles which were not produced in high numbers during World War II, since resources and factories were being dedicated to the war effort. Oakland's Auto Row district had three Kaiser-Frazer dealerships on the 2000s blocks of Broadway during the 1940s. The Kaiser-Frazer slogan was "We sell to make friends."

Today, the Kaiser Oakland Medical Center stands at the site of the showroom, and is the organization's flagship hospital. Henry Kaiser's venture into hospital facilities was led by his efforts to organize health care at his wartime shipyards, which predated his entry into the automotive industry.

PHOTO

Oakland Wiki, https://localwiki.org/oakland/Kaiser-Frazer_dealerships

CAPTION

Kaiser Permanente, <https://about.kaiserpermanente.org/our-story/our-history/kaiser-motors-in-oakland-we-sell-to-make-friends>

Oakland Wiki, https://localwiki.org/oakland/Kaiser-Frazer_dealerships

Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaiser_Oakland_Medical_Center