State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code 3CS
Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 1349 Larkin Street

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Alaska Garage/Superior Auto Painting Company shop
P2. Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted
*b. USGS 7.5' Quad _____ Date _____ T ___; R ___; ___¼ of ___¼ of Sec ___; _____B.M.
c. Address 1349 Larkin Street City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 645, lot 2

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

This two-story, brick masonry building fills its lot, which has a width of 44'-6" along Larkin Street and a depth of 89'-6". The front of the building is faced in buff-colored brick. In composition, the facade is divided into three bays of almost equal width, the only difference being that in the first story, the piers that define the center bay are slightly narrower than the end piers are. The entire composition rests upon a low concrete bulkhead faced in scored stucco.

Windows in the second story have segmental arched heads of brick, original wood frames, and replacement metal sash. In the first story, the windows in the end bays are divided by wooden mullions into three parts, with a further division by transom bars. Wooden muntins divide the glazing into smaller lights. These muntins are either original or match the originals precisely. Lintels for the windows are steel plates that are visible beneath the brick wall above. In the middle bay, a transom similar to those in the windows can be found over the former vehicle entrance, which has been altered in metal and glass for pedestrian entry.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 2.)

*P3b Resource Attributes: HP8 – industrial building

*P4. Resources Present:
■ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)
View looking west
June 2009

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1909-1910; building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
BABCOCK FAMILY LVG TRUST
1349 LARKIN STREET
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94109

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)
William Kostura
P. O. Box 60211
Palo Alto, CA 94306

*P9. Date Recorded: January 2010

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe) intensive

P11. Report Citation*: (Cite survey report.) William Kostura. *Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures*. San Francisco Department of City Planning, 2010.

*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ■ Continuation Sheet ■ Building, Structure and Object Record ☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record ☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (List)

Description (continued)

Ornament in the Classical Revival style is restrained. A profiled cornice and course of dentils stretch across the building just below the top of the parapet. Keystones and a broken belt course in the second story appear to be of cast stone. Depressions in the brickwork form square panels between the second story windows. Brickwork is layered, with window surrounds of brick recessed slightly behind the wall plane.

Detail of the second story. The thin wooden window frames are original, but the metal sash within is not. The key stones and belt course are most likely made of cast stone.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 3CS

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 1349 Larkin Street

B1. Historic Name: Alaska Garage/Superior Auto Painting Company shop

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: private garage B4. Present Use: offices

***B5. Architectural Style:** Classical Revival

***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Built in 1909-1910. Window sash in second story and entrance altered at an unknown date.

***B7. Moved?** ■ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown **Date:** _____ **Original Location:** _____

***B8. Related Features:**

none

B9a. Architects: Ward and Blohme b. Builder: unknown

***B10. Significance: Theme** automobile industry **Area** San Francisco

Period of Significance 1909-1910, 1913-1964 **Property Type** garage, auto repair shop **Applicable Criteria** 1, 3

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

History – Construction and architects

This building was built in 1909-1910 as a private garage for owner Sarah Sloss. She was a member of the Sloss family that co-founded (with the Gerstles) the Alaska Commercial Company, dealers in furs, hides, and wool, in the 1860s or early 1870s. Just how this building was used as a private garage is unknown. No member of the Sloss family lived near here, nor were any commercial enterprises of the family situated nearby, as far as is known. It is possible that the Slosses owned an apartment building in the vicinity and that this garage was devoted to use by its tenants. At any rate, the Sloss family owned this building through the year 1921.

The architects for this building were Ward and Blohme, a very important San Francisco firm. Clarence Ward had gained prominence as the junior member of Meyers and Ward during 1904-1909. They designed several very important downtown office buildings after the earthquake and fire of 1906, among them the Alaska Commercial Building at California and Sansome (1908; demolished), a commission that led to this project for Ward a year later.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 4.)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) _____

***B12. References:**

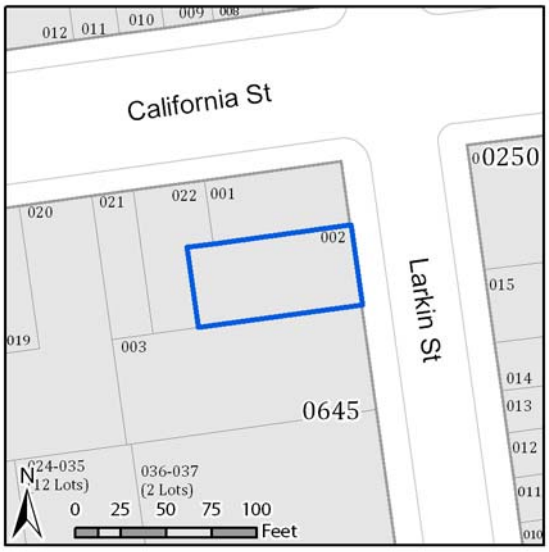
Building permit #27006 (December 3, 1909)
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, PT&T reverse directory, and PT&T yellow pages listings for occupants of this building, 1913-1964
1913 Sanborn insurance map (1349 Larkin, garage)
1918 and 1929 Sanborn insurance maps (merged with 1335-1347 Larkin as the "Graystone Garage")
Sales Ledgers for 1914-1947, Recorder's Office, City Hall

B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** William Kostura
Date of Evaluation: January 2010

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)



History – Construction and architects (continued)

In 1909, Ward left Henry Meyers to form a new partnership with J. Harry Blohme, their former draftsman. This partnership continued until 1932. Among their works was the Palace of Machinery at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition; the reconstruction of the Memorial Church at Stanford University after the 1906 earthquake (extant); the shingled Girls' Club at 362 Capp Street (1911; extant); St. John of God church at 1290 Fifth Avenue (1919; extant); two city schools; and several very beautiful brick firehouses for the San Francisco Fire Department, of which only one, Engine #37, at 2501 25th Street (1918), survives. Ward and Blohme also designed one other building in the study area of this report, a garage at 1840 Washington Street (recently demolished).

History – Occupants

As mentioned above, the initial use of this building was as a private garage for the Sloss family. Within three years, however, this building began its commercial use, which it has retained ever since. The commercial occupants of this building through 1964 (the end year of the period being studied) were:

1913-1914: Alaska Garage. The name must have been derived from the Alaska Commercial Company, which was owned by the Sloss family.

1915-1926: Graystone Garage. During these years the building at 1349 Larkin was merged as one business under this name with its neighbor next door to the south, 1335 Larkin. This merging is clearly shown in the 1918 Sanborn map. The address of the Graystone during these years was usually given in city directories as 1335 Larkin, but an advertisement in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (Jan. 5, 1920, p. A-7) gives its address as #1349. It is not known whether an opening was made through the walls of these two buildings to connect them. Proprietors of the Graystone Garage over these years included John V. Kays (1920-1921) and John C. Bahame (1923-1926). Although the public garage business in these buildings had a common proprietor during these years, the physical buildings had different owners.

1927: John H. Barter, auto repair. By this year, 1349 Larkin no longer had any business connection with #1335.

1928-1934: Clarence F. Degen and Horace L. Green, auto repair. Clarence Degen opened his auto repair shop here in 1928, and in 1931 he was joined by H. L. Green. Each man had his own separate listing in city directories, indicating that their businesses were distinct. However, when they moved away from this building to 1465 Pine Street (extant; also in the study area), they moved together, indicating a partnership of sorts.

1935-1944: E. A. Morrison, auto repair. In 1940, and perhaps in other years, Morrison specialized in the repair of Stutz automobiles.

1945: Henry Langdon, Automotive Body Repair

1946: Superior Body and Fender Works

1947-1964+: Dulio and Frank Artigiani, Superior Auto Painting Company. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, at least, this firm also performed body, radiator, and fender work (see photo, page 8).

(Continued next page.)

History – Occupants (continued)

To summarize, for the period through 1964 (the end year of the period being studied), this building had 14 years of use as a public garage (1913-1926), 20 years of use as an auto repair shop (1927-1946), and 18 years of use as an auto painting shop (1947-1964). The total auto-related use of this building was for 52 years.

History – Context

Public garages in the study area

Within the study area of this report, nineteen public garage buildings still stand that have at least fair integrity. Eight of them were built and had such use before the 1920s and qualify as the oldest garages in the study area. For purposes of comparison with 1349 Larkin, they are listed here, in order of construction date, and with the number of years of garage use it had through 1964:

The Alaska Garage, 1349 Larkin Street. (The building being evaluated here.) Built 1909-1910. Years of public garage use: 14 (beginning in 1913). During most of its years of garage use it was joined with its next-door neighbor at 1335 Larkin as a single garage. 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. 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). Its integrity is high.

Besides these, four other public garages from the 1900s and 1910s still stand in the study area but have been heavily altered. At least ten others from the 1900s and 1910s that once stood in the study area have been demolished.

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 be identified.

(Continued next page.)

History – Context (continued)

From the above list it can be seen that 1349 Larkin is the oldest known garage building in San Francisco. It also has a level of integrity as high, or nearly as high, as that of any other garage. In another sense, this building is not as good an example of a public garage as some others are, because its longevity of garage use was only fourteen years; all of the other garage buildings dating from the 1910s had longer use as a public garage, most for much longer.

Auto repair shops in the study area

In addition to its use as a public garage, 1349 Larkin also had 20 years of use as an auto repair shop, beginning in 1927. It is one of over 40 buildings in the study area that had this use for at least seven years (through 1964). The following discussion will compare 1349 Larkin with the other buildings in terms of their earliest dates of auto repair use, their longevity of auto repair use, their integrity, and occasionally their size or capacity. (These buildings are identified in an appended historic context statement, "Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures, 1908-1964.") To summarize here:

> Three buildings in the study area were devoted to use as auto repair shops beginning in the 1910s, for periods of from 20 to 45 years, and have a level of integrity equal to or better than 1349 Larkin's. These buildings can be considered better examples of auto repair shops relative to 1349 Larkin.
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> Seven buildings held auto repair shops beginning in the 1920s (i.e., at about the same time as 1349 Larkin), for a period of time lasting from 35 to 44 years (i.e., for a substantially longer period compared to 1349 Larkin), and have fairly high integrity. An eighth building from the 1920s has slightly lesser integrity but is a much larger building. These buildings can be considered better examples of auto repair shops relative to 1349 Larkin.
>
> At least 30 buildings in the study area can be considered as lesser examples of an auto repair shop because their longevity in this use was brief, their initial date of such use was substantially later than 1349 Larkin's, their integrity is substantially less than 1349 Larkin's, and/or because the building is substantially smaller, and thus had less capacity as a repair shop, relative to 1349 Larkin.

In summary, relative to 1349 Larkin, roughly eleven buildings in the study area are clearly better examples of auto repair shops, and roughly thirty are lesser examples.

Integrity

The only alterations to the exterior of this building are the replacement window sash in the second story and the modern materials that fill the former vehicle entrance. The survival of the original wooden, three-part windows and transom in the first story is increasingly remarkable. In sum, this building retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.

Evaluation

This is one of more than 100 buildings along the Van Ness Avenue corridor that have a history as automobile support structures, and that are being evaluated for possible historic significance according to the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources. With a few exceptions, these buildings were auto showrooms, public garages, auto repair shops, auto parts and supplies stores, and auto painting shops. The time period that is being studied is from the initial years of the automobile industry in San Francisco through 1964. Among the factors that have been considered when evaluating a building are its date of construction, its longevity of auto-related use, the importance of its occupants in local auto industry history, integrity, and architectural quality. These factors, and how they apply to evaluations of buildings, are discussed in a cover report, *Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures, 1908-1964.*

This building appears to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1 in three ways. These are explained below:

A) For the period through 1964, this building had over fifty years of automobile-related use beginning in 1913. It is thus an early example of such a building with excellent longevity in such use. This building also has very high integrity, especially for a building of its age. For these reasons, it appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1, at the local level, for its overall automobile-related use. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1913-1964, the years the building had this use.

B) Under its specific use as a public garage: this building had fourteen years of such use beginning in 1913, and thus is a very early example of such a building, with fair longevity in this use. No public garage in the study area, and perhaps none in San Francisco, had an earlier date of such use and also equal or better integrity. Very many garages in the city, however, had much greater longevity of such use. On balance, because of its early date and high integrity, this building appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1, at the local level, for its use as a public garage. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1913-1926, the years the building had this use.

C) Under its specific use as an auto repair shop: this building had 20 years of such use beginning in 1927, and thus is a moderately early example of such a building with good longevity in this use. It is approximately the twelfth best example of an auto repair shop in the study area that is still standing. Roughly thirty buildings are lesser examples, and many auto repair shops that once stood in the study area have been demolished. For these reasons, this building appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1, at the local level, for its use as an auto repair shop. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1927-1946, the years the building had this use.

None of the proprietors in this building's history had individual importance in his field. Accordingly, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2.

Architecturally, this building is a restrained example of the Classical Revival style. The composition and proportions, however, are pleasing, and the brick detailing is excellent. For these reasons, because of its high integrity, and because of the importance of its architects, by whom few buildings other than houses remain, this building appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1909-1910, the year of construction.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building are its height and width, its buff-colored brick façade with all of its brick detailing, the cornice and dentils, the second story keystones and broken belt course, the wooden frames (but not the metal sash) of the segmental-arched second story windows, the wooden first story windows with their mullions and muntins, the similar transom over the former vehicle entrance, and the bulkhead that is clad in scored stucco.

Photo, ca. 1962. Assessor's negatives, San Francisco History Archives, Main Library. 1349 Larkin at right. All elements of the building shown here are still in place except for the following two elements: in the second story, the wooden, double-hung window sash; and in the first story, the (barely visible) paired wood paneled vehicle doors. At left is 1335 Larkin, the building that was joined with this one in common use as the Graystone Garage during ca. 1915-1926.