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

PRIMARY RECORD

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

 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 1670 Pine Street

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Knoph and Dunbar auto showroom
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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 1670 Pine Street City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 647, lot 11

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

This brick masonry building fills its 40' by 137'-6" lot. The façade is clad in white-colored brick, and its composition is divided by piers into three bays of equal width. At the top of the building a low parapet is capped by a course of cast stone or concrete and rises after a single step to a gabled peak. A plaster shield with swags decorates the center of the parapet area. Immediately below the parapet a profiled cornice with a paneled soffit stretched across the façade. It is supported by four pairs of curved brackets, a pair being located at the top of each pier. Bands of classical ornament can be found in the frieze area beneath the cornice.

*P3b Resource Attributes: HP6 – two-story commercial building; HP8 – industrial building

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

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

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1917; building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
PINE & FRANKLIN-CA LLC
P.O.BOX 4900
SCOTTSDALE AZ 85261

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

*P9. Date Recorded: February 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, 2009.

*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):

Second story windows are rectangular and have replacement metal sash within original wooden frames. A sill of cast stone or concrete forms the base of each of these windows. At the second floor level is a secondary cornice, also profiled. In the first story, tall arched windows fill the outer bays, and a rectangular entrance opening of equal height fills the middle bay. The arched windows are framed by two concentric courses of bricks, with a course of headers slightly recessed within a course of stretchers. These courses are decorated, and interrupted, by scroll keys that meet and lend visual support to the cornice above.

Within the arched windows, spandrels can be found at what appears to be a mezzanine level, and mullions divide the glazing above into several lights each. These spandrels and mullions appear to be original, but a closer examination is needed to confirm this. The window area below is boarded up. In the center bay, the entrance is completely altered with new doors and framing.

This building is one in a row of five one and two-story buildings at 1644-1670 Pine Street, all of which date to the 1910s and have histories related to the automobile industry. Collectively, these buildings have a frontage on Pine of 204 feet.

Detail of parapet, cornice, brackets, and frieze ornament. The windows have replacement metal sash set within original wooden frames.

Detail of arched window in first story

The row of five buildings at 1644-1670 Pine Street

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 3CB

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 1670 Pine Street

B1. Historic Name: Knoph and Dunbar auto showroom

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: auto showroom B4. Present Use: vacant

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

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

Built in 1917. Second story window sash and entrance altered at an unknown date.

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

***B8. Related Features:**

none

B9a. Architects: Heiman and Schwartz b. Builder: O. W. Britt

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

Period of Significance 1917-1940, 1951-1964 **Property Type** auto showroom & 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 1917 as an investment for owner L. A. Myers, a somewhat prominent real estate developer of the period. The architects were Samuel Heiman and Mel I. Schwartz, who were working in partnership as Heiman and Schwartz. These architects also designed two other buildings for L. A. Myers on this same block in the same year, at 1650 and 1660 Pine Street.

After apprenticeships, the two formed a partnership that lasted from 1914-1919. Together they designed small commercial buildings such as these three on Pine Street and Mediterranean-styled houses in Forest Hill and St. Francis Wood. After 1919 they each worked independently, Heiman into the 1940s and Schwartz to 1930. Heiman had the more prominent career, designing many commercial and industrial buildings, some of which were large; institutional buildings; fine residences; apartment buildings; and the Health Department building at 101 Grove Street (1930-1931). Schwartz designed little on his own, but two of his houses are exceptional. They are an English Renaissance house at 2112 Lake (1929) and a more ornate Baroque house at 2151 Sacramento (1921), built for Dr. Albert Abrams. It is one of the finest small houses in the city.

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

***B12. References:**

Building permit #75773 (March 30, 1917)
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1918-1964
Display ads for Knoph and Dunbar in SF Chronicle, 1917-1922, found via ProQuest website (through SFPL's website)
1936 Sanborn insurance map (auto service)
1951 Sanborn insurance map (store)

B13. Remarks:

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

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)

History -- Occupants

This building was occupied by several automobile-related businesses for most years from the time of its completion through at least 1964. These businesses included an auto showroom, two auto repair shops, a tires shop, and a wheel alignment shop.

Knoph and Dunbar, Ford dealers

The first occupants, Harry T. Knoph and William G. Dunbar, sold Ford automobiles here from 1917 through 1921. In 1922, perhaps due to the recession of the early 1920s, Knoph dropped out of the partnership and Dunbar continued to sell Ford on his own through at least June of that year, before quitting the business. During these five years Knoph and Dunbar was one of from twelve to fifteen Ford dealerships in San Francisco at any one time. The *San Francisco Chronicle* explained in an article ("Ford Agents in City Win Way on Merit Alone," March 4, 1917, p. 50) that, unlike other auto manufacturers, who usually appointed one distributor for the entire city, Ford had an independent dealership in each district of the city. William L. Hughson, the city's first and largest Ford dealer, had the dealership for upper Van Ness Avenue (at #1101; demolished), Smith and Kaiser sold Fords on lower Van Ness (at #214; altered), Flynn and Collins sold Ford on Golden Gate Avenue (demolished), and other Ford dealers were located on Valencia Street, downtown, in the outer Mission, and so forth.

In early 1917, Knoph and Dunbar, then a brand new dealership, sold Fords from 1028 Geary (extant), which besides being a small storefront had the disadvantage of being less than a block from William L. Hughson's large Kissel Kar and Ford showroom. After only a few months there they elected to move to larger quarters, and it seems likely they contracted with L. A. Myers to occupy his new building at 1670 Pine before its construction even began. In retrospect, this does not seem like a very good location for an auto dealership, since it was surrounded by auto repair shops, tire shops, a garage, and other auto support businesses, and nearly a block from other auto showrooms on Van Ness. However, the fact that Knoph and Dunbar survived here for five years denotes a certain success, and it seems this dealership carved out a niche for itself.

Subsequent occupants

After Knoph and Dunbar left, the following auto repair and related shops occupied this building:

1924: According to a building permit, an auto tops factory occupied this building in that year. The name of this business is unknown.

1925-1927: Fred Kahn and Son, auto repair

1929-1930: Dayton Rubber Company. Presumably this firm sold automobile tires.

1934-1940: Fred Lewertoff, auto repair

1941-1950: The occupants of this building are unknown for these years.

1951-1964: Superior Frame and Wheel Aligning Service

(Continued next page.)

History -- Occupants

In sum, this building was occupied by a Ford dealership for five years, general auto repair shops for ten years, an auto tops factory for up to one year, a tires shop for one or two years, and a wheel alignment shop for fourteen years, for a total of about 31 years of known auto-related use (through 1964, the end year of the period being studied).

History – Context – Surviving Ford showrooms in the study area

Many buildings in the study area have held Ford dealerships from 1903 through 1964. The great majority of them have been extensively altered or demolished. Those that survive with at least fair integrity include (in chronological order):

550-590 Van Ness Avenue. Under the name Standard Motor Car Co., William L. Hughson sold Ford autos here from 1909-1913. Later, during 1925-1928, Flynn and Collins sold Fords here also. Thus, Ford was sold here for a total of eight years. All of this building's window sash has been altered, but it is otherwise intact.

1670 Pine Street (the building being evaluated here). Knoph and Dunbar sold Ford here during 1917-1922.

950 Van Ness Avenue. Cecil Whitebone' Midtown Motors sold Ford here from 1940 into the 1970s. This building's window and door sash have been altered.

1270 Bush Street/1200 Larkin Street. This building was occupied by William L. Hughson's Ford business from 1943 to his death in 1967. Its main use was as his office and service shop, but he also sold autos here during 1943-1945 and some later years. This building has high integrity.

1400 Van Ness Avenue. William L. Hughson sold Ford autos here from 1945 until his death in 1967. This building has high integrity.

The most significant of these are the three that were occupied by William L. Hughson, the most important Ford dealer in San Francisco's history. 1670 Pine is of much lesser importance, but it is the only building still standing in the study area where Fords were sold during the late 1910s and early 1920s.

Integrity

This building is largely intact. In the second story, windows have replacement metal sash within original wooden frames. In the first story, the spandrels and the mullions in the upper part of the windows are of uncertain date; they seem compatible, however, with this building's date of construction. The first story vehicle entrance has been altered within the original opening. The rest of this building's façade, including its ornamental scheme, remains in place. In sum, this building retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, setting, and association, while integrity of materials and feeling are slightly diminished.

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.*

Completed in 1917, this is an early example of an automobile-related building showroom. It has brief longevity as an automobile showroom (five years), moderate longevity as a general auto repair shop (ten years), and excellent longevity of overall auto-related use (31 years). In addition, this is the last surviving auto showroom in the study area where Ford autos were sold during the late 1910s and early 1920s. Although there are much better examples of auto showrooms and also of general auto repair shops in the study area, this building's early date of construction, excellent longevity, and good integrity help it to illustrate important aspects of the early auto industry in San Francisco. For these reasons, the building appears to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1, at the local level, for its overall auto-related use. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1917-1940 and 1951-1964, the years the building had such use.

None of the proprietors of businesses in this building is known to have been individually important in his field. Accordingly, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2.

Architecturally, this building is notable for its textured façade, the conception of its parapet and cornice area, and its large, arched first story windows with scroll keys. It is also a fine example of the work of Samuel Heiman, an architect of some importance in San Francisco's history. This building accordingly appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1917, the year of construction.

Potential historic district

This building also appears to be a contributor to a potential California Register historic district, under both Criterion 1 (for their early automobile-related history) and Criterion 3 (for their design), at the local level. This district includes the five adjacent buildings at 1644, 1650, 1656, 1660, and 1670 Pine Street, all of which were built in the 1910s; all of which were originally occupied by automobile-related businesses; and four of which were designed in the Classical Revival style and have good to high integrity.

(Continued next page.)

Evaluation (continued)

This district appears to be eligible for the California Register under criteria 1 and 3; and 1670 Pine appears to be a contributor under each of these criteria. Under Criterion 1: Auto-related buildings that date to the 1910s and retain good integrity have become somewhat scarce, and nowhere else in the study area can one find more than two intact auto-related buildings from this decade in a row. This row of five is quite remarkable for their early date and high integrity, and evokes the early history of the automobile industry in San Francisco as no other group of buildings can. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1917-1933, the years that all of these buildings had automobile-related uses at the same time. Under Criterion 3: Four of these five buildings (including 1670 Pine) possess fine details or ornament in the Classical Revival style, and were clearly designed with care. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1912-1917, the years they were designed and built. Please see the District Record form for 1644-1670 Pine Street for a fuller discussion of this potential historic district.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building are its height and width, the white brick façade, the stepped and gabled parapet with its cap of concrete or cast stone, the plaster shield-and-swag ornament in the parapet, the profiled cornice with supporting brackets, the band of ornament beneath this cornice, the rectangular windows in the second story with their sills and wooden frames, the secondary cornice at the second floor level, the arched window openings in the first story with their brick surrounds and scroll keys, and the shape of the central entrance opening. If the spandrels and mullions in the upper part of the first story windows should prove, upon further examination, to be original, then they should count as character-defining features as well. The replacement sash in the second story windows are not contributing features to this building.