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

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code 6Z
Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 1528-1540 Pine Street

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Kenneth J. Larkins Company auto repair 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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ **Not for Publication** ■ **Unrestricted**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 1528-1540 Pine Street City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN ***e. Assessor's parcel #:** Block 646, lot 5

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

This two-story, stucco-clad, reinforced concrete building fills its lot, which measures 98'-6" in width along Pine Street by 137'-6" in depth. A profiled cornice stretches across the top of this building. Below it, in turn, are a blank frieze and a profiled belt course. These simple features give the building its minimalist Classical Revival style.

In composition, the building is divided by unarticulated piers into five bays. Wall areas within the piers are very slightly recessed relative to the piers themselves. Vehicle entrances are located in the wide end bays, while storefront windows with low bulkheads occupy the narrow middle bays.

In the second story, all windows have replacement aluminum sash set in original openings. In the first story, the vehicle openings, which are original, have received non-original partitions, and the storefront windows all have new steel frames. Non-original sheet metal awnings cover all of the openings mentioned above. One set of three original industrial steel sash windows can be found in the mezzanine level in the easternmost bay.

***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 north
June 2009

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:** ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1922; building permit

***P7. Owner and Address:**
GOLDEN GATE CYCLES LTD
1528 PINE ST
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94104

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

***P9. Date Recorded:** December 2009

***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)

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 6Z

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 1528-1540 Pine Street

B1. Historic Name: Kenneth J. Larkins Company auto repair shop

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: auto repair shop B4. Present Use: motorcycle sales

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

***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Built in 1922. Window sash altered at an unknown date.

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

***B8. Related Features:**
none

B9a. Architect: Reid Brothers b. Builder: John Spargo

***B10. Significance: Theme** automobile industry **Area** San Francisco
Period of Significance n/a **Property Type** auto repair shop **Applicable Criteria** n/a
(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

History

This building was built in 1922 for Lucy and Edith Allyne as an investment to designs by the Reid Brothers, architects. This building's occupants for its first three years, 1922-1925, remain unknown despite a careful search through the 1924 and 1925 city directory classifieds of auto-related categories. For the next forty years the building was occupied by automobile repair shops and, more briefly, public garages. The proprietors of these shops were:

1926-1930: Shirley McAndrew, auto repair
1933: Ray Hilton, auto repair
1936-1939: Kenneth J. Larkins, garage
1931-1932: Fred G. Armstrong, garage
1935-1936: L. W. Brindle, auto repair
1940-1964: Kenneth J. Larkins, auto repair

In sum, this building held auto repair shops for 33 years (through 1964) and a garage for six years. The total auto repair and garage use of this building (through 1964) was for 39 years.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 4.)

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

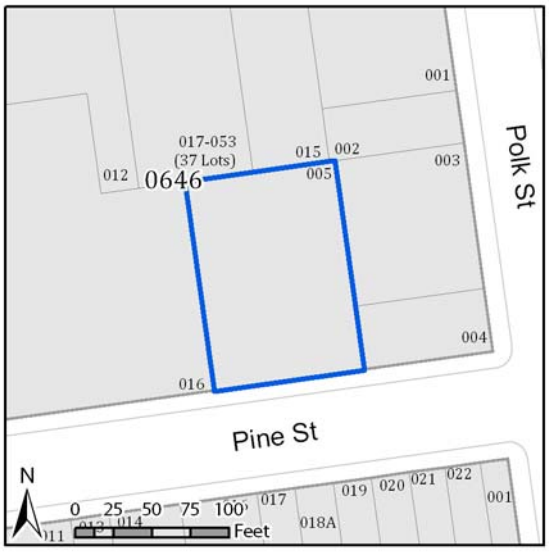
***B12. References:**
Building permit #106577 (April 19, 1922), filed under "1530 Pine"
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1913-1964
1948 Sanborn insurance map (1540 Pine, garage, capacity of 150 cars, repairing and painting on second story, built 1923)
Coachbuilt.com website on Larkins and Co.

B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** William Kostura
Date of Evaluation: December 2009

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)



History (continued)

The last proprietor in this list, Kenneth J. Larkins, was one of the successor firms to a much older business named Larkins and Co. Larkins and Co. was founded by Kenneth Larkins' grandfather, William Larkins, in 1865 as a carriage manufacturer. Burned out of his South-of-Market factory in 1906, William Larkins re-established his carriage-making factory on Guerrero Street. In 1913 he sold the business to his son, William B. Larkins, who moved it to the new auto row on Van Ness Avenue and added a new line of product. At 1600 Van Ness, William B. Larkins manufactured not only carriages (a fading concern), but also automobile bodies, and offered an auto body repairing, trimming, and painting service. In 1920 he moved the business again, to a spacious former streetcar barn at 3700 Geary at Arguello. The business remained there through 1935. (1600 Van Ness still stands with fair integrity. 3700 Geary still stands with high integrity dating to Larkins' time.)

Three sons of William B. Larkins became partners in this business in the late 1920s. One of them, Kenneth Larkins, concentrated on auto repair at Geary and Arguello. Seven or eight years later, upon the dissolution of Larkins and Co., Kenneth Larkins established his own auto repair shop in the subject building, 1528-1540 Pine, where he remained at least to 1964.

History – Alterations

A photograph of this building from the 1950s can be found at the San Francisco History Center in the Main Library. The building as shown in this photograph seems to have been generally unaltered from the time of construction in 1922. A comparison of this photo with the building as it is today reveals that it has since been altered to remove almost all of the original sash in both the first and second stories; to add infill to the two vehicle entrances (reconfiguring these entrances); and to add sheet metal awnings over all window and entrance openings. The wall surface of the façade is otherwise unaltered.

History – Context

Over 40 buildings still stand in the study area that were occupied by auto repair shops for seven years or longer (through 1964). In order to evaluate 1528-1540 Pine Street for possible historic significance it will be useful to compare it to the rest of these buildings in terms of their earliest dates of auto repair use, the longevity of this use in each building, and the integrity of each building. These buildings are identified in an appended historic context statement, "Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures, 1908-1964." They are summarized here:

> Three buildings in the study area were devoted to use as auto repair shops beginning in the 1910s, for periods of from 23 to 45 years, and have integrity that is equal to or better than 1528-1540 Pine's. These are the oldest auto repair shops in the study area and thus are better examples of this building type than 1528-1540 Pine is.
>
> Seven buildings held auto repair shops beginning in the 1920s (at about the same time as 1528-1540 Pine), for a period of time lasting 35-43 years (i.e. for a similar or longer period compared to 1528-1540 Pine). All of these buildings have better integrity than 1528-1540 Pine does, and are better examples of this building type.

(Continued next page.)

History – Context (continued)

Two buildings (1560 Pacific and 24 Franklin) are similar to 1528-1540 Pine in a number of ways. They held auto repair shops for 33 years beginning in 1928 and 1931, respectively, and have good integrity other than the alteration of their vehicle entrances, which take up a large proportion of the façade area. These two are very small shops, and in that respect are not as good examples as 1528-1540 Pine.

Approximately 19 buildings in the study area held auto repair shops beginning in the 1910s, 1920s or 1930s, for periods ranging from seven to 34 years, and have integrity comparable to or better than 1528-1540 Pine. Some of these are better examples of auto repair shops than 1528-1540 Pine is, and some are not. All of them, however, also held other important auto-related uses (such as garages, auto showrooms, and specialty service shops) for many years. All of these buildings are more important for their overall auto-related use than 1528-1540 Pine is.

About ten buildings in the study area are less important than 1528-1540 Pine due to loss longevity of their auto repair shop use or due to their loss of integrity.

In summary, relative to 1528-1540 Pine about ten buildings in the study area are clearly better examples of auto repair shops; two are similar in importance; ten are lesser examples (mainly due to loss of integrity); and 19 are better examples of buildings that had multiple auto-related uses, including auto repair.

Integrity

The windows and entrances are altered within the original openings, and the balance of the façade is unaltered, save for addition of awnings. The openings constitute a fairly large percentage of the façade area. Overall, this building retains integrity of location, design, and association, while integrity of materials, workmanship, and feeling are substantially diminished. Integrity of setting is also diminished, mainly due to construction of a large hotel (mis-matched in scale) adjacent on the west.

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 was completed in 1922, and the earliest known occupant, an auto repair shop, dates to 1926. This is thus a moderately early example of an automobile repair shop. With 33 years of such use in its history, and 39 years of all auto-related use (through 1964), it has excellent longevity in such use.

(Continued next page.)

Evaluation (continued)

If this building had better integrity, this building would have historic significance as an auto repair shop. The integrity, however, is diminished due to the alteration of almost all window and entrance openings; and while the façade is otherwise intact, these openings constitute a fairly large percentage of the façade. A fairly large number of other auto repair shops still stand that are either older examples of this building type or have substantially better integrity, and for this reason this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1.

Under Criterion 2, the only occupant of particular interest is Kenneth Larkin, whose family ran an auto body building shop beginning in 1913, and a carriage factory before that. The history of this important family business is much better represented by the building at 3700 Geary Street where the business was located from 1920 through the 1930s. Accordingly, the building being evaluated here, 1528-1540 Pine, does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2.

Architecturally, this building is devoid of detail other than the cornice, and lacks interest. In addition, integrity is diminished due to the loss of original window sash. Thus, this building does appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3.

Photograph of 1528-1540 Pine Street, ca. 1950s.
San Francisco History Archives, San Francisco Public Library, Assessor's negatives.