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) 131 Fell Street

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Speedometer Service 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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 131 Fell Street City San Francisco Zip 94102
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 834, lot 19

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

This is a two-story building, apparently reinforced concrete in structure, that fills the width of its 41-foot wide lot. The façade of the building is coated in stucco. A pent roof of imitation Spanish tiles supported by wooden brackets stretches across the top of the building. In the second story, six evenly-spaced, segmental arched windows, all with replacement aluminum sash, can be found. Below the windows a painted sign occupies the spandrel area between the stories. The first story façade appears to have been generally altered. It has a pedestrian entrance at far right, a vehicle entrance nearly adjacent to its left, and a storefront window at far left.

*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 south
June 2009

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1929; building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
W CR GROUP LP
70 SEACLIFF AVE
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94121

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

*P9. Date Recorded: August 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) 131 Fell Street

B1. Historic Name: Speedometer Service Company shop

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: unknown B4. Present Use: auto repair

***B5. Architectural Style:** Spanish Colonial Revival

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

Built in 1929. Façade alterations at an unknown date.

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

***B8. Related Features:**

none

B9a. Architect: none b. Builder: Richard Harms

***B10. Significance: Theme** auto 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 1929 for owner A. Rassmussen by contractor Richard Harms. The earliest occupants are unknown. According to the PT&T reverse directory of 1933, the building was occupied then by the installation department of Levin's Auto Supply, which, according to Polk's city directory of that year, was located at 11 Van Ness Avenue.

The occupant from 1937 to at least 1964 was Speedometer Service Company, owned (through at least 1948) by C. C. Anderson. For most years Speedometer Service shared the building with the Auto Electric Carburetor Company (1938-1959), and it may be the two were under the same ownership. At least one other business also shared this space: E. B. Huff radio service, in 1940.

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

***B12. References:**

Building permit #180905 (August 1929), at S. F. Building Inspection Dept., 1660 Mission Street

Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1933-1964

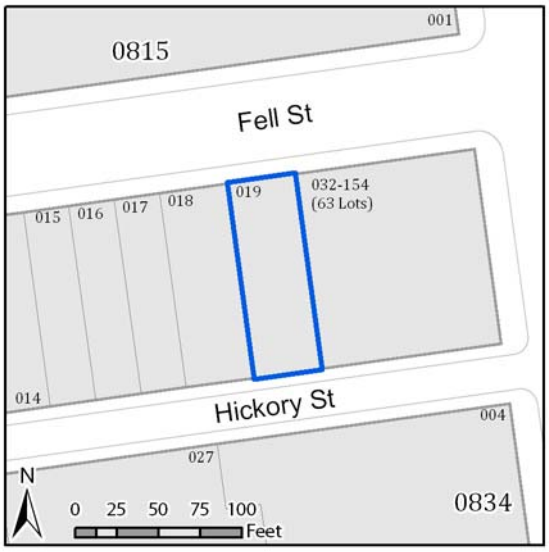
B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** William Kostura

Date of Evaluation: August 2009

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)



Integrity

The building appears to be largely altered in the first story, and the upper story window sash is also altered. Because of the survival of the pent roof and the segmental arched window openings the general design of the building remains discernable. Overall, the building retains integrity of location, design, setting, and association, but has lost integrity of materials and workmanship. Its integrity of feeling is borderline.

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*.

The earliest known automobile uses of this building date to the 1930s, which is a moderately late date for such a use. Speedometer Service Company occupied the building for 27 years through 1964, and thus so the building had good longevity under this use. Given this history, and the diminished integrity of this building, it does not appear to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criteria 1 or 2. Architecturally, this building is extremely modest, with marginal integrity, and it also does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3.

This is part of a cluster of five auto-related buildings in a row of six lots. (The others are #s 149, 155, 159, and 165-167 Fell.) Only two of these, #s 159 and 165-167 Fell, possess more than 50% integrity, and thus no possibility of a potential automobile-related historic district appears to exist in this cluster.