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) 854 Ellis Street

P1. Historic name of building (if any): The Brake 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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 854 Ellis Street City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 718, lot 9

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

This is a one-story brick automobile repair shop that fills its 27'-6" by 120' lot. The front of the building is made of tan-colored brick and rises to a gabled parapet. Beneath the gabled area is a profiled cornice with corona, supported by scroll modillions. The frieze beneath the cornice is blank, save for circular medallions at the ends. A belt course of brick runs beneath the frieze for the full width of the building, and is supported by plate steel and brick piers. In the left (west) half of the façade, the storefront window, pedestrian entrance, and transom are constructed as a single unit of modern steel framing. To the right (east) is a roll-up door to the vehicle entrance.

*P3b Resource Attributes: HP6 – commercial 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
1920; published building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
ABUYAGHI ROGER & NORA R
824 ELLIS ST
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94109

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

*P9. Date Recorded: July 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) 854 Ellis Street

B1. Historic Name: The Brake Shop

B2. Common Name: _____

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

***B5. Architectural Style:** _____

***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Built in 1920.

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

***B8. Related Features:**
none

B9a. Architect: none b. Builder: J. G. Kincannon

***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 1920 and has been occupied by automobile repair shops from 1922 until at least 1964. The first several proprietors were here only briefly: Alex Rodriguez (1922-1924), Joseph J. Lodge (1924-1925), Motor Service Engineering Co. (1927-1929), and Paul and Neil, Inc. (1931-1934). In 1935 L. D. Vroman opened his own auto repair shop here, and the following year he began specializing in brake repair, as The Brake Shop. The Brake Shop remained in business here at least through 1964.

Integrity

This building has had one substantial alteration: the replacement of the original storefront window and pedestrian entry with modern metal framing. That alteration covers a large percentage of the façade area of this small building. Nevertheless, this building retains overall integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.

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

***B12. References:**
Edward's Abstracts, February 19, 1920
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory, for occupants of this building, 1922-1964
1929 Sanborn insurance map ("auto repair")

B13. Remarks:

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

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)

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*.

Among automobile-related buildings in the study area of this report, 730 Ellis Street was built at a moderately early date (1920), its use as an auto repair shop was moderately early (beginning in 1922), and this use had excellent longevity (about forty years). These three factors tend to lend historic significance to this building. Other factors tend to minimize the building's importance: the first four auto repair shops in this building (through 1934) were each here only briefly; the only long-lasting business, The Brake Shop, was a specialized business of lesser importance (compared to general auto repair); and the alteration to the storefront window and pedestrian entry takes up a large proportion of the area of this façade. For these reasons, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under criteria 1 or 2. Under Criterion 3, design, this is building is a fair example of small auto repair shop design, one harmed somewhat by the window alteration, and thus it also does not appear to be eligible under this criterion.