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) 24 Franklin Street

**P1. Historic name of building (if any):** Topolos Brothers 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 Location: *a: County** San Francisco ☐ **Not for Publication** ■ **Unrestricted**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 24 Franklin Street City San Francisco Zip 94102

d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN ***e. Assessor's parcel #:** Block 836, lot 12

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

This one-story, reinforced concrete building fills the width of its 25-foot lot. The façade is covered with stucco, and rises to a gabled parapet. Nearly all of the lower portion of the building is devoted to a wide automobile entrance. Detailing is limited to a faint profiling at the top of the parapet, a large recessed panel for signage above the entrance, and curving brackets at the top sides of the entry. A portion of a sports car body has been grafted onto the side of the building in recent years.

***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 east
June 2009

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:** ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1927; building permit

***P7. Owner and Address:**
AHO ENTERPRISES INC, A CAL
956 BRANSTEN RD
SAN CARLOS CA 94070

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

***P9. Date Recorded:** September 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) 24 Franklin Street

B1. Historic Name: Topolos Brothers auto repair shop
B2. Common Name: _____
B3. Original Use: tires shop B4. Present Use: auto repair
*B5. Architectural Style: Classical Revival
*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Built in 1927.

*B7. Moved? ■ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____
*B8. Related Features:
none

B9a. Architect: G. A. Lansburgh b. Builder: unknown
*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 1927 for owner Marion Leventritt to designs by architect G. Albert Lansburgh. Much earlier, in ca. 1912, the same architect had designed the six-story brick apartment building two lots to the south, at 1582-1598 Market Street, for the same owner.

The first occupant of this building, 24 Franklin, was Turner Tire and Vulcanizing, Inc., a tire service shop (1927-1932). It was followed, briefly, by Auto Metal Repair (1933).

The longest-term occupant of this building was the Topolos Brothers Auto Repair shop, run by James and John Topolos. They occupied this building from 1935 to at least 1964. In sum, for the period through 1964, various kinds of automobile repair and service shops occupied this building for about 37 years. The building is currently used as an auto body shop.

In sum, this building had five years of occupancy as a tire shop (1927-1932); and 32 years of occupancy (through 1964, the end year of the period being studied) as an auto repair shop (1933-1964).

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

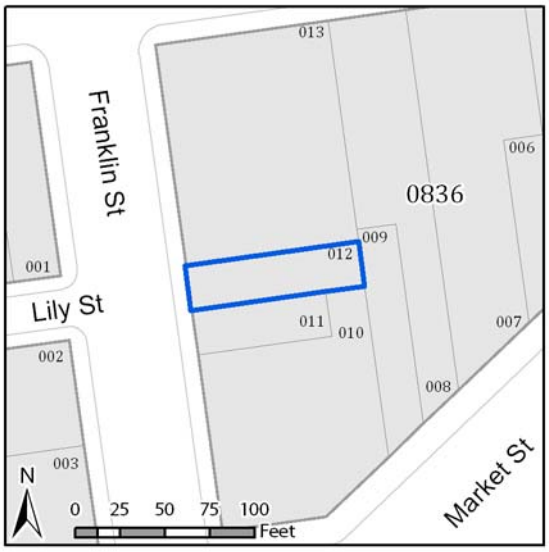
*B12. References:
Edwards Abstracts, September 2, 1927 (via Heritage files)
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and Kelt's and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1927-1964
1928 Sanborn map ("tire service")

B13. Remarks:

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

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)



**History -- Context**

The best examples of auto repair shops in the study area would be the oldest examples (i.e. buildings whose auto repair use began at the earliest dates), those with the greatest longevity of such use, and those with the highest integrity. Larger repair shops are also better examples than smaller ones (age, longevity, and integrity being roughly equal). A list of "best examples" would not include automobile showrooms where auto repair was subordinate activity to auto sales. It would also not include buildings that had a narrow, specialized use such as tires, brakes, or battery service, or an auto painting shop; those might be best considered as separate building types.

A summary of the best examples in the study area (compared with 24 Franklin) follows below:

> Eight buildings in the study area are clearly older and longer-lasting examples of auto repair shops relative to 24 Franklin. Beginning with the earliest examples, they are: 1465 Pine (30 years of such use beginning in 1917), 1634 Pine (45 years beginning in 1919), 843 Polk (44 years beginning in 1920), 650 Polk (41 years beginning in 1920), 845 Polk (39 years beginning in 1920), 300 Grove (37 years beginning in 1920), 824 Ellis (35 years beginning in 1920), 1765 California (43 years beginning in 1921).
>
> Four buildings are similar in age and longevity to 24 Franklin, but are better examples of auto repair shops because they are substantially larger buildings, and thus had greater capacity. They include: 1528-1540 Pine (33 years beginning in 1926), 550 Turk (30 years beginning in 1927), 55 Oak (35 years beginning in 1929), and 1522 Bush (34 years beginning in 1931).
>
> Two buildings have less longevity than 24 Franklin, but they are much earlier examples, and on balance should be considered as better examples of auto repair shops. They are 155 Grove (23 years beginning in 1915) and 731-799 Van Ness (25 years beginning in 1917). The latter building also had much greater capacity than 1560 Pacific.
>
> One building has somewhat less longevity than 24 Franklin, and became an auto repair shop at a slightly later date, but is so much larger that it should probably be considered as a better example. That building is: 730 Ellis (29 years beginning in 1936). It also has a long history of other auto-related uses.

In all, fifteen buildings in the study area should be considered as much better examples of auto repair shops than 24 Franklin is.

Approximately 20 other buildings in the study area were used as auto repair shops for several years or longer in their history. Some of these have poor integrity and thus can no longer be considered as good examples of this building type. Some began their auto repair use in the 1930s, rather late in the history of this building type. Some had only brief longevity in this use. Several were built for other uses, such as public garages, and are better considered as examples of those building types. It is unknown how many good examples of auto repair shops survive elsewhere in San Francisco.

**Integrity**

The exterior of this exceedingly simple building does not appear to have undergone notable alterations, other than the application of a sports car body to the side. Thus, the 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*.

Completed in 1927, this is a moderately early example of an automobile tire shop. With five years of such use in its history, it has brief longevity in this use. This was also an auto repair shop for 32 years beginning in 1933. This is thus a moderately late example, with excellent longevity in this use. The total auto-related use was 37 years, for excellent longevity.

Given the moderately late date that this building began its use as an auto repair shop, and its small capacity, it is clear that there are many (about fifteen) much better examples of this building type in the study area. This building's use as a tire shop began earlier but was brief. For these reasons, and in spite of the building's high integrity, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1.

None of the persons who occupied this building were particularly important in their field. Accordingly, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2.

Architecturally, this building is exceedingly plain, and is a very minor example of Lansburgh's work. Accordingly, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3.