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

PRIMARY RECORD

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

 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 300 Grove Street

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Sunden and Nicolson 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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 300 Grove Street City San Francisco Zip 94102
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 792, lot 3

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

This is a one-story brick masonry building originally built as an automobile repair shop. It fills its 57'-6" x 68'-9" lot at the northwest corner of Grove and Franklin streets and is now surrounded by large civic buildings built during the 1930s-1980s. Wall surfaces are a reddish-orange brick that appear to have undergone light sand blasting. A brick cornice with corbelling runs the full width of both facades, just below the parapet. In composition, the building is four bays wide along Grove Street and five bays wide along Franklin, each with evenly spaced, segmental arched openings of the same size and shape. Six of the openings are filled by windows with wooden mullions, transom bars, and muntins that divide the windows into many lights, brick headers form the sills. The other three openings retain their transoms but are otherwise devoted to entrances with non-original doors. Two of these, one in each façade, were originally vehicle entrances. A third entrance was cut into what was once a window facing Franklin Street; it retains one of its original mullions and some original muntins.

*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
1920; building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
KIMBALL & JANE ALLEN TRUST
2 LONE TREE AVE
MILL VALLEY CA 94941

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

*P9. Date Recorded: August 2009

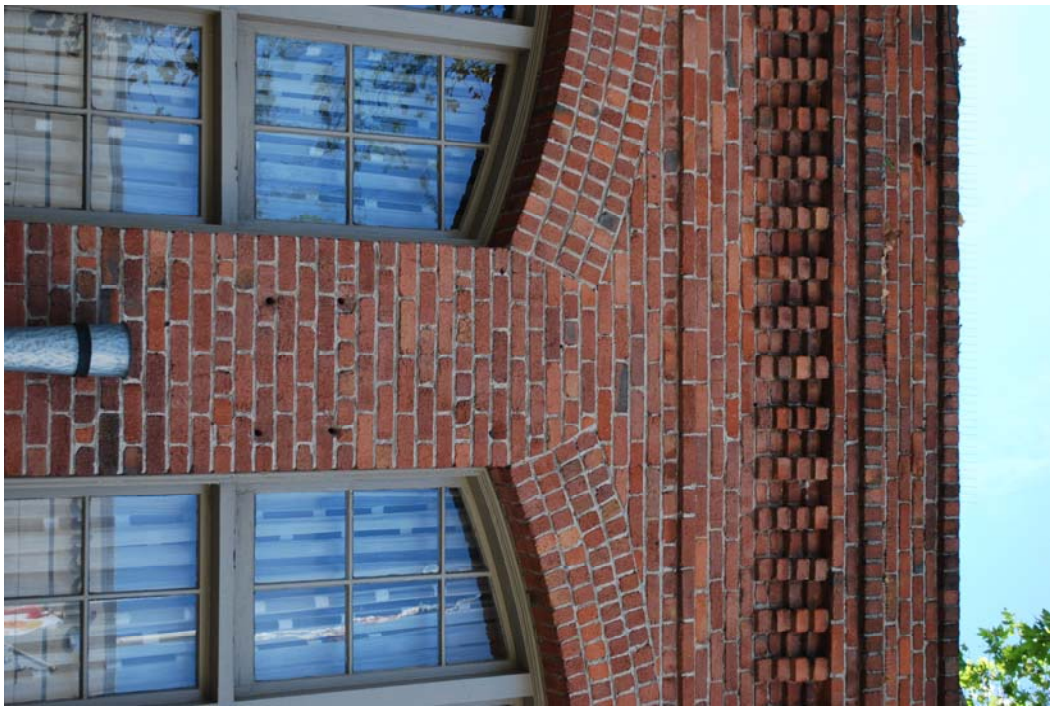
*P10. Survey Type: (Describe) intensive

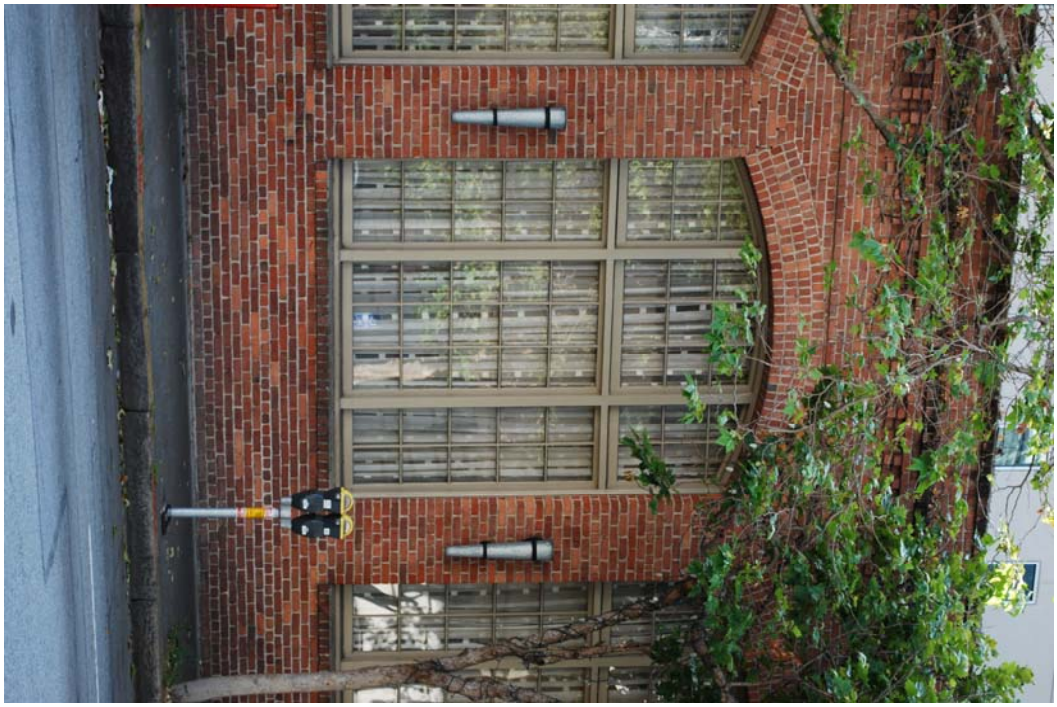
P11. Report Citation*: (Cite survey report.) William Kostura. *Van Ness Auto Row Support Structures*. San Francisco Department of City Planning, 2010.

*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)

Photo of 300 Grove Street, from the Department of City Planning's 1976 survey of historic buildings

Top photo: Grove Street façade
Bottom photo: Franklin Street façade





Top photo: cornice detail
Bottom photo: window detail

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 3CS

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 300 Grove Street

B1. Historic Name: Sunden-Nicolson auto repair shop

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: auto repair

B4. Present Use: restaurant

***B5. Architectural Style:** early 20th century industrial

***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: A. Lacy Worswick

b. Builder: unknown

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

Period of Significance 1920-1964 **Property Type** auto 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

This auto repair shop was built in 1920 for owner Harry M. Nicolson to designs by architect A. Lacy Worswick. Nicholson was an auto repairman who owned a shop at 155 Grove Street, in a building which he rented. Instead of occupying 300 Grove upon its completion, he rented it out to various tenants and continued, for unknown reasons, to occupy the smaller building at 155 Grove as a renter.

Nearly all of the uses of this building through 1964 were as auto repair shops. They included: David W. Everett, auto repair (1920-1922); J. R. Sunden, auto repair (1923-1929); Matthew Walters, who had a radiator repair shop and may have sublet space from Sunden (1927-1929); T. F. Ormand, used car sales (1931); and Bob Barrett, auto repair (1933-1937). In 1937 Nicolson ended his use of 155 Grove and moved his auto repair shop into this building for several years (1937-1941).

(See Continuation Sheet, page 4.)

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

***B12. References:**

Building permit #91705 (March 11, 1920), at S. F. Building Inspection Dept., 1660 Mission Street

Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, PT&T reverse directory, and PT&T yellow pages listings for occupants of this building, 1920-1964

1928 Sanborn insurance map: "auto repair"

B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** William Kostura

Date of Evaluation: August 2009

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)

History (continued)

Afterward, from 1946 to at least 1976 this building was occupied by Ignition Supply and Exchange, which, according to their listing in the 1947 yellow pages, performed motor tune-up, carburetor, electrical and brake servicing, and general auto repair. Signage on the building in 1976 indicated similar work was done then, along with generator and starter servicing. Proprietors of this business included Lawrence L. Woods (1946-1948), Arthur Smith and L.L. Woods (1950), A. J. Smith (1951), Carl C. Hauser and William F. Forsey (1953-1962), and C. C. Hauser (1964).

In sum, this building was occupied almost continuously by auto repair shops from 1920 to at least 1976. For the period being considered in this study (through 1964), this building was occupied by auto repair shops for at least 38 years. Only one proprietor remained here for more than seven years, the exception being Ignition Supply and Exchange.

Integrity

The exterior of this building is in a relatively high state of preservation. It still possesses the great majority of its wooden windows and virtually all of its brick masonry wall fabric. The neighborhood around it has changed greatly since the 1920s, however. In sum, this building retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It has lost integrity of setting.

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*.

Built in 1920, this is a moderately early example of an auto repair shop. With at least 38 years of this use through 1964, it has had excellent longevity of such use. For these reasons, and because the integrity of the building is high, the building is one of the best auto repair shop buildings in the study area, and appears to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources at the local level under Criterion 1, for its use as an automobile repair shop. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1920 to 1964.

Early proprietors of auto repair shops in this building are not known to have been especially important. Accordingly, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2.

(Continued next page.)

Evaluation (continued)

The composition and proportions of this building are very pleasing, and there is fine detailing in its windows and cornice. This seems to be an exceptionally well-designed automobile repair shop. Thus this building appears to be eligible for the California Register at the local level under Criterion 3, for its design. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1920, the year of construction.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building include its height, width, and depth, its red brick surface, the brick cornice, the brick heads to the arched window and entrance openings, the brick window sills, and the wooden window frames, sash, mullions, and muntins.