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) 500 Turk Street

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Kahn and Keville tires and batteries 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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 500 Turk Street City San Francisco Zip 94102
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 741, lot 2

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

This reinforced concrete automobile shop building occupies a fifty-vara lot (137'-6" square) at the northwest corner of Turk and Larkin streets. The building is L-shaped, with a west wing fronting on Turk Street and an east wing fronting on Larkin. The two wings meet at the northwest corner of the lot, leaving an open area in front (facing the corner of Turk and Larkin) that is used for vehicular access and parking. The building is one story in height, except for the corner section where the two wings; it is two stories in height. The building is faced in a coating of stucco. Windows – all in the west wing and the corner section – have steel frames or sash and appear to be original. Those in the west wing are divided by transom bars and mullions, while those in the two story section are divided into smaller lights by mullions and muntins.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 2.)

*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 #)
Perspective view looking SW
June 2009

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1935; building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
KAHN IRVING H TR ELKUS CHAR
500 TURK ST
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94102

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

*P9. Date Recorded: October 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)

Description (continued):

The east wing is divided into five bays, three of which are devoted to automobile service. Bays in all three parts of the building – the two wings and the corner section – are defined by piers with slanted sides; those piers located at the corners of the wings rise into the frieze area and taper to a point. These piers give the building its faintly Art Deco style. Other decoration is limited to short vertical hatching impressed into the stucco at the base of each frieze.

Most signage is applied to the frieze of the building. In addition, two large, diamond-shaped Goodyear tire signs are mounted on the roof near the end of each wing. Finally, a billboard-type sign is mounted on steel poles at the southeast corner of the parking lot. It has changeable lettering that has spelled out inspirational messages for at least the past thirty years.

Detail of the east wing

Detail of the west wing

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 3CS

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 500 Turk Street

B1. Historic Name: Kahn and Keville tires and batteries shop
B2. Common Name: Kahn and Keville tires and batteries shop
B3. Original Use: tires and batteries shop B4. Present Use: tires and batteries shop
***B5. Architectural Style:** Classical Revival
***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Built in 1935.

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

B9a. Architect: Henry A. Minton Structural engineer: L. H. Nishkian b. Builder: unknown
***B10. Significance: Theme** automobile industry **Area** San Francisco
Period of Significance 1935-1964 **Property Type** tire and battery 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 building was constructed in 1935 for owner Mrs. F. H. Rolandi to designs by architect Henry A. Minton and structural engineer L. H. Nishkian. The architect, Minton, was active in San Francisco from the 1910s-1940s. He is noted for the many churches and schools he designed for the Roman Catholic Church and for his numerous banks for the Bank of Italy and Bank of America. Some of these buildings are extremely fine and are notable landmarks. Nishkian was one of San Francisco's two most prominent structural engineers during the 1920s-1940s (the other being H. J. Brunnier). Both Nishkian and Minton had worked for San Francisco's Department of Public Works under M. M. O'Shaughnessy during the 1910s, and each worked on at least one major structure in the Hetch Hetchy system. They may have collaborated on Hetch Hetchy or other city work early in their careers. 500 Turk, however, is the only building that they are definitely known to have collaborated on.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 5.)

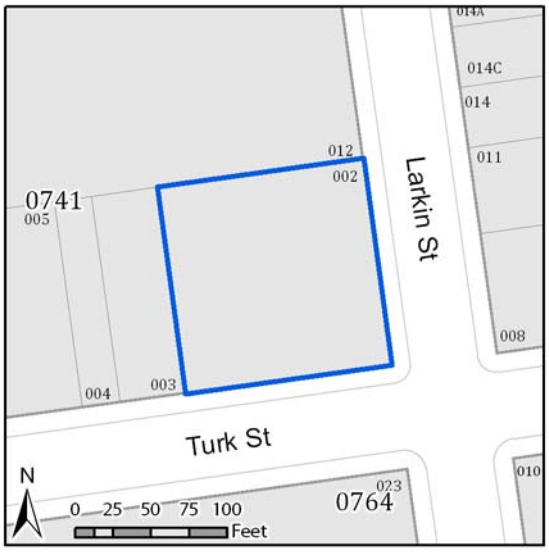
B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) _____

***B12. References:**
Building permit #11435 (April 9, 1935)
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1914-1964
1948 Sanborn insurance map ("gas and oil")

B13. Remarks:

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

(Sketch map with north arrow required)



(This space reserved for official comments.)

History (continued)

The first and only occupant of this building has been Kahn and Keville, dealers in tires, auto batteries, and appliances from 1935 to the present. Harry H. Kahn arrived in San Francisco in 1914 and opened a vulcanizing shop at 409 Larkin Street. Only one year later he formed a partnership with Hugh J. Keville at 489 Golden Gate Avenue, where they ran an auto tires and batteries shop. (That building has been demolished.) During 1918-1925 they had a small storefront at 982 Post Street (extant), and during 1925-1935 they were at 1600 Bush Street (also extant). In 1935 they made their final move, from that storefront into the subject building, 500 Turk Street, where they installed as well as sold these products. Newspaper display ads and city directory listings reveal that they sold Goodyear tires from at least 1917 to the 1960s, and no doubt afterward as well.

The 1936 city directory lists the products sold by Kahn and Keville at 500 Turk: Goodyear tires; Hobbs batteries; radios by General Electric, RCA Victor, Atwater-Kent, and Philco; Hotpoint ice machines; and General Electric washing machines. From 1939 through 1949 they sold Goodyear tires, Hobbs batteries, radios by Zenith, Philco, and RCA, plus ice and washing machines by GE. Their line-up remained similar through 1964, when they sold Goodyear tires, batteries, and products by RCA, Zenith, and GE, as well as performing brake service and wheel alignment. Through all these years Goodyear tires was always listed first in their city directory listings, and batteries were listed second. Harry Kahn was a partner through 1951, and in 1953 the partners included Hugh Keville plus two other persons.

This is one of about twelve surviving buildings in the study area that had some importance as tire shops. Nine of these buildings had such history dating back to the 1910s, two back to the 1920s, and two (including the subject building) back to the 1930s. Of these twelve, nine had a history as a tire shop for ten or more years. Those nine include:

1412-1420 Van Ness (ten years: 1913-1923; Firestone tires; good integrity)
1233-1237 Van Ness (ten years: 1914-1924; good integrity)
1430-1480 Van Ness (ten years: 1915-1924, 1927; fair integrity)
1650 Pine (ten years: 1917-1927; integrity is good)
1660 Pine Street (about 17 years: 1917-1933; high integrity)
1441 Bush Street (about 30 years: 1922-1951; good integrity)
1501-1519 Mission (1928 to the present)
1601 Mission (1931 through at least 1964; Firestone tires; altered)
500 Turk Street (1935 to the present; Goodyear tires; high integrity)

Of these nine, only two buildings are known to have sold a major tire brand for most of their history. 1601 Mission Street sold Firestone tires, and 500 Turk, as mentioned, sold Goodyear. Of these two, 500 Turk has much better integrity.

As one can see, the earlier buildings listed above had briefer longevity of use as tire shops, and the later ones had greater longevity in such use.

500 Turk is also one of three buildings in the study area that have some importance as automobile battery shops and have high integrity. The other two are 1540 Bush, which held a battery shop from 1916-1926, and 1660 Pine, which held a battery shop from 1917-1927.

Integrity

No important alterations appear to have been made to the exterior of this building. It has integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.

Evaluation

This is one of more than 115 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 1935, this is a moderately late example of an automobile tire and battery shop. With 29 years of such use in its history (to 1964), it has good to excellent longevity in this use. Although this building was not one of the earlier examples of a building that had such uses, it had these uses for longer than almost any other building, and has extremely high integrity. It is also clear that Kahn and Keville were major tire dealers in San Francisco, specializing in Goodyear practically from their founding. For these reasons, 500 Turk appears to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1, at the local level, for its use as an automobile tires and batteries shop. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1935-1964, the years the building had this use (through 1964).

Harry H. Kahn and Hugh J. Keville had substantial longevity as tire and battery dealers. They were small-scale dealers until they moved to this building in 1935, and then had one of the larger tire and battery shops in the city. On balance, they do not seem very significant in the general automobile-related history of San Francisco. More research, however, could change this assessment. For now, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2.

Under Criterion 3, 500 Turk is most important for its plan. It represents a departure from the plan of automobile repair shops of the 1900s-1920s. These earlier auto repair shops conformed to the plan of other light industrial building of those decades, typically filling the entirety of their rectangular lots and requiring customers to drive their autos into the building for servicing. The building at 500 Turk Street, by contrast, fills only a portion of its lot, leaving considerable outdoors space for maneuvering of automobiles and parking. The building itself is divided into wings, one of which was devoted to product sales and the other of which holds vehicle bays for servicing. Offices, it appears, were located at the junction of these two wings. In the design of this building, then, the architect and his client jettisoned the traditional model of an urban industrial building and chose instead to take into account the special needs of an auto servicing business, i.e. one that required outdoor maneuvering space and indoors service bays that were separated from product sales. The Art Deco detailing on this building, though minimalist, gives the building sufficient flair to distinguish it from a purely functional building of this type. For these reasons, this building appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1935, the year of construction.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building are its height and plan, with wings that meet at the northwest corner of the lot and open space in front; the stucco surface of the building, including the vertical hatch marks in the frieze; the steel sash windows; and the Art Deco piers at the corners of the wings.

A permit history search would have to be done to ascertain whether the two diamond-shaped Goodyear signs are old enough to count as contributing features. If they date to 1964 or earlier, they should be considered character-defining features. The importance of the billboard-type sign is also uncertain; it should probably not be considered to be character-defining.