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) 1415 Van Ness Avenue

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Roos Brothers men's furnishings store/Eugene S. Miner 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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 1415 Van Ness Avenue City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 666, lot 4

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

This two-story, wood-framed building fills its 60' (along Van Ness) by 100' (along Austin) lot at the southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Austin Street. The corner of this building at Van Ness and Austin is chamfered, and otherwise the building is rectangular in shape. The higher level of finish is to be found on the Van Ness Avenue façade, which is divided into three bays; in the chamfered corner; and on the two adjacent bays on Austin Street; while the balance of the Austin façade is much less highly finished. The cladding material on the second story is horizontal wood siding, laid flush. There is no siding, as such, on the first story of the Van Ness side and on adjacent bays, as that façade area is taken up entirely by storefront windows, piers, and transom bars. The balance of the first story, along Austin Street, is clad in a coating of stucco, which is a replacement of the original clapboard siding.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 2.)

*P3b Resource Attributes: HP6 – two-story commercial building; HP8 – industrial building

*P4. Resources Present:
■ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)
View looking southwest
June 2009

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1906; newspaper article

*P7. Owner and Address:
VARLOW LLC
50 BEACH DR
SAN RAFAEL CA 94901

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

*P9. Date Recorded: February 2010

*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, 2009.

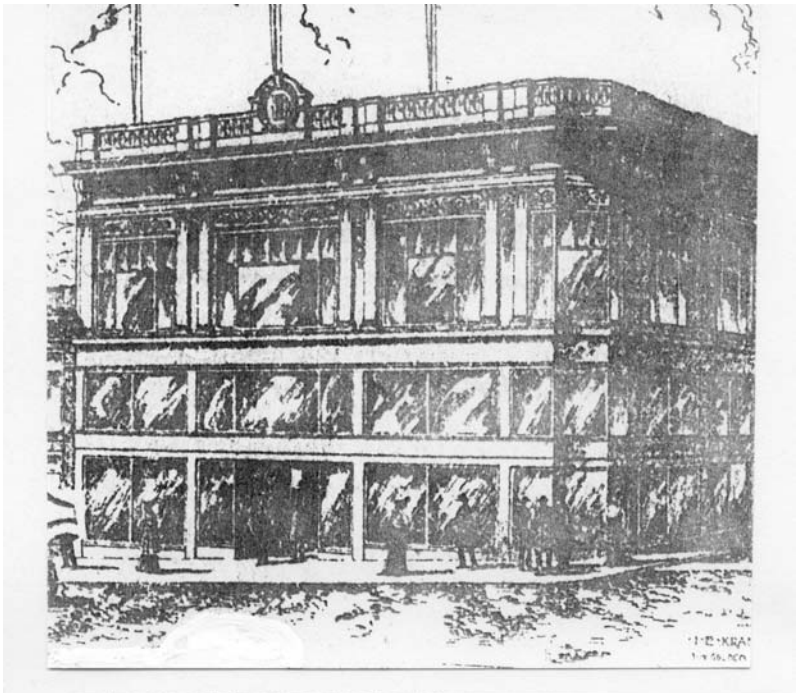
*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ■ Continuation Sheet ■ Building, Structure and Object Record ☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record ☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (List)

Description (continued):

Ornamentation is Classical Revival in style. At the top of the building is a profiled wooden cornice. It is supported by block modillions and appended brackets, of plaster, that are intensely foliated. These modillions and brackets are paired, and correspond to paired pilasters below. A course of egg-and-dart molding runs along the base of the cornice and wraps around the corner of the building. Below the egg-and-dart molding is a blank frieze, and below this is a secondary cornice. This latter cornice is lent visual support by paired Ionic pilasters that enframe the second story windows. Plaster ornament in the form of cartouches and foliation can be found between the pilasters and above the windows.

At the second floor level another profiled cornice and a blank frieze, both original, can be found. Tuscan pilasters divide the first story façade into bays, and transom bars further divide the storefront windows. Although these first story pilasters seem quite compatible with the classical style of the building, they are not original but were added in the 1980s or later; the original piers in these locations were thinner, and were overlapped by the transom bars. A low bulkhead (original) forms the base of the storefront area.

Detail of the second story cornice, ornament, and altered window sash



Top photo: Drawing of this building from "Designs for Several Fine Buildings Have Been Drawn," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 12, 1906, p. 5, regarding new buildings designed by Julius E. Krafft. This was a design drawing for the Roos Brothers clothing store, predating the construction.

Bottom photo: 1415 Van Ness, from the Department of City Planning's 1976 survey of historic buildings. The balustrade shown in the top drawing is no longer in place. The divided window sash in the second story was still in place in 1976, but has since been removed. The glazed wooden doors shown in the middle bay of the Van Ness side may be the result of a 1910 alteration made to allow vehicle entry for Libby and Miner's auto repair shop. These vehicle doors were removed by the mid-1980s. The spandrel in the first story, as shown in this photo, appears to be an overlay of the original transom bar. At far right, rustic or clapboard siding is visible in the first story of the Austin Street façade; it has since been replaced by stucco.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

***NRHP Status Code** 3CS

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) 1415 Van Ness Avenue

B1. Historic Name: Roos Brothers men's furnishings store/Eugene S. Miner auto repair shop

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: clothing store B4. Present Use: retail store

***B5. Architectural Style:** Classical Revival

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

Built in 1906. Balustrade removed before 1975. Window sash altered and first story pilasters added after 1982.

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

***B8. Related Features:**

none

B9a. Architect: Julius E, Krafft b. Builder: unknown

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

Period of Significance 1906-1964 **Property Type** retail store, auto repair, auto sales **Applicable Criteria** 1

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

History – Construction and architect

This building was built in the second half of 1906 for the Roos Brothers clothing store as part of the temporary retail district being developed along Van Ness Avenue after the earthquake and fire. The architect was Julius E. Krafft (1855-1937). Krafft was a prolific architect with a diversified practice of designing commercial, institutional, and residential buildings. Born in Germany, he came to the United States in 1872 and to San Francisco two years later. He apprenticed with T. J. Welsh and John P. Gaynor before opening his own architectural office in 1889. He was quickly successful. A very fine Queen Anne style house at 1819 Jackson dates from his first year of practice, and St. Paulus Lutheran Church (1892; now burned) followed soon after. Other major works of his included the Affiliated Colleges (with Martens and Coffey, 1897; demolished), the James L. Flood mansion at 2120 Broadway (1901), and Mt. Zion Hospital (as J. E. Krafft and Sons; 1912; demolished). He worked with his sons until the early 1930s and then retired.

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

***B12. References:**

"Designs for Several Fine Buildings Have Been Drawn," SF Chronicle, Sept. 12, 1906, p. 5; re: Roos Bros. store here.
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1906-1964
1912 Sanborn insurance map ("garage and repairing")
1936 Sanborn insurance map ("autos 1st and 2nd")

B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** William Kostura
Date of Evaluation: February 2010

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)

History – Occupants

This building was occupied for just over two and one-half years by clothing stores (1906-1909). It then became devoted to automobile use, first as an auto repair shop (1910-1916), next as a showroom for new cars (1917-1922), and then as a salesroom for used cars (1924-1964, *passim*). In all, this building had about 46 years of automobile-related use, counting through 1964, the end year of the period being studied for this report.

1906-1909: Clothing stores

September 1906 to January 1909: Roos Brothers

The first occupant of this building was Roos Brothers, a men's clothing store that was long prominent in San Francisco. The WPA guide to the city (*San Francisco: The Bay and Its Cities*, published by Hastings House, New York, 1947, p. 189) gives some of its history. The founders were Adolph and Achille Roos, who came from France, sold clothing to Comstock Lode miners, and then opened Roos Brothers on Leidesdorff Street in 1865. From 1867 to 1906 they occupied their own fine building on Kearny Street, then the city's main shopping street. That building was destroyed by the earthquake and fire.

After the fire, and before building a permanent new downtown store, Roos Brothers built and occupied two temporary stores, one on each of the city's main shopping boulevards during the post-earthquake and fire period. The first, completed in June 1906, was on Fillmore Street, at the southeast corner of O'Farrell (per *San Francisco Call*, June 23, 1906, p. 5). Roos Brothers soon added a second store, at 1415 Van Ness, near Bush.[1] A drawing of the latter building (shown on page three of this report) was published in the *Chronicle* on September 12, 1906, and two days later a display ad for Roos Brothers stated that their "elegant, modern store on Van Ness Avenue at Bush is nearing completion." By October 16th the Van Ness store was open, and the two stores operated concurrently. Both the Fillmore Street and Van Ness Avenue stores were designed by architect Julius E. Krafft. The interior of the building on Van Ness featured a balcony or gallery that wrapped around a central shopping court and was lighted by a central domed skylight.

The two stores were open through the year 1908. In that year Roos Brothers built a permanent downtown store at Market and Stockton streets. It opened on November 30th, but Roos Brothers kept 1415 Van Ness open for another two months. It closed at the end of January 1909 (per a display ad in the *Chronicle*, February 1, 1909, p. 3).

(The Fillmore Street store no longer stands. The downtown store at Market and Stockton was completely altered in 1936-1938, but continued to serve as Roos Brothers into the 1960s. It was severely altered again, in the 1990s for Virgin Records. In 1968 the clothiers Roos-Atkins built a new store at 799 Market; it, too, has since been completely remodeled.)

(Continued next page.)

[1] City directories of December 1906, 1907, and 1908 give the address as 1457 Van Ness. The drawing of the building in the *Chronicle*, September 12, 1906, makes clear that Roos Bros.'s Van Ness store was today's #1415.

History – Occupants

March to May 1909: I. Magnin

The women's clothing store, I. Magnin, took over occupancy of 1415 Van Ness on March 1st, 1909, but closed two months and one week later, on May 8th, when their downtown store at Geary and Grant opened. (Sources: display ads in the San Francisco Chronicle, February 28, 1909, p. 31, and May 8th, 1909.)

1910-1916: Eugene S. Miner, auto repair shop

As downtown was rebuilt, retail businesses left Van Ness Avenue, and the void on Van Ness was gradually filled by automobile-related businesses. For a few years the city's auto showrooms and related businesses were concentrated along the stretch of Van Ness between Golden Gate Avenue and Market Street. Not until the city's new Civic Center displaced many of these businesses in 1912 did very many auto-related businesses move to upper Van Ness.

A few auto showrooms, repair shops, etc. did locate on upper Van Ness before 1912. One of these was the auto repair shop of Eugene S. Miner. With various partners, his business occupied 1415 Van Ness for six or seven years, from 1910 to 1916.

Born in California in 1880, Miner began working as a machinist in 1901 for the Sunset Automobile Company, which was managed by engineer and inventor Dorville Libby, Jr. at 1814 Market Street. It was one of the first automobile dealerships in San Francisco, and Miner was thus one of the city's early auto repairmen. In 1909 or 1910 the two men, engineer and machinist, under the firm name of Libby and Miner, opened an auto repair shop at 1415 Van Ness Avenue. In 1911 or 1912 Libby left the partnership, Sidney B. Sargeant took his place, and the firm became known as Miner and Sargeant. In 1913 a third partner, C. C. Barre, joined the firm, which became known as Miner-Sargeant-Barre.

The 1913 Sanborn insurance map shows that their auto repair shop occupied the first story of this building, and that the central open gallery was still in place. The floor, according to the Sanborn map, was wooden, and must have become stained with dripping grease from the automobiles. An "aeroplane factory" occupied the second story. The skylight must have supplied welcome natural light to both businesses.

In 1916 Miner-Sargeant-Barre moved their auto repair shop to 1540 Van Ness (demolished). In 1927 Eugene S. Miner, then working solo, moved again, to 1540 Bush Street (extant). He remained there until his death in 1941. Afterward a relative continued the auto repair business under the name Eugene S. Miner Company.

(Continued next page.)

History – Occupants

1917-1922: Auto showrooms

Two auto dealerships occupied this building during these five years. Between them they sold four brands of automobiles that were once well-known, but are now little remembered. The two were:

April 1917-March 1918: Cole-Pacific Motor Company. This dealership formed near the end of 1915 in order to acquire the northern California, Nevada, and Hawaii distributorship for the Cole brand of automobile. Initially Cole-Pacific was located at 2050 Van Ness (extant), but in April 1917 it moved into 1415 Van Ness to be at the center of Auto Row. Here, Cole-Pacific fitted out the interior as a sales room, service room, and parts room, undoubtedly using both stories for these purposes.

The Cole Motor Company was founded by Joseph J. Cole and made assembled automobiles in Indianapolis during 1909-1925. It made an early reputation by winning auto races in 1909 and 1910, and in 1912 it began to build limousines for the luxury market. It was one of the early auto makers to install V-8 engines in its cars. In 1918 Cole offered three models, all high-priced: a roadster, a touring car, and a "speedster."

After only one year at 1415 Van Ness, Cole-Pacific lost the Cole dealership for northern California to L. D. Allen, who then sold Cole autos across the street at 1412-1414 Van Ness (extant). In a sort of musical chairs of auto dealerships, 1415 Van Ness then became home to the Leach-Frawley Motor Company, which sold three brands of autos.

March 1918-1922: Leach-Frawley Motor Company and Frawley Motor Company. This company formed in January 1917 in order to sell the Dort automobile in northern California. The partners were John W. Frawley, of Dallas, Texas, and M. A. Leach, of Los Angeles, who each owned a Dort showroom in his home city and who knew each other through the auto business. They were enthusiastic enough about the brand's prospects to form a partnership and to purchase the Dort agency for northern California.

The brand they sold was a relatively new one. Dort's founder, Josiah Dort, had made wagons and carriages since 1884 and much later became an officer with Chevrolet. With this dual experience he founded his own auto manufacturing company in 1915, in Flint, Michigan. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle* ("New Firm Enters the Local Field," January 14, 1917, p. 47), the Dort auto was designed by Etienne Planche, "the same genius who laid the foundation for the famous Peugeot factory in France." The Dort brand quickly became popular, and must have been attractive to prospective auto dealers around the country.

In San Francisco Dort autos were first sold by the Logan-Cadwalader Company from their showroom at 1301-1305 Van Ness Avenue (extant). Leach-Frawley and Logan-Cadwalader reached an agreement whereby the former would acquire the Dort agency for northern California from the latter. This deal was described by the *Chronicle* as "entirely friendly," and the newspaper added that Logan-Cadwalader

(Continued next page.)

History – Occupants (continued)

was helping Leach-Frawley to set up shop (Leon J. Pinkson, "New Firm Enters Local Auto Car Field," *SF Chronicle*, January 11, 1917, p. 4). It is difficult to interpret this report with confidence, because newspapers of the period always put a positive spin on auto industry developments. If taken at face value, however, Logan-Cadwalader seems to have been only too happy to unload its Dort line and to concentrate on selling its other auto brand, the Velie.

Leach-Frawley opened a Dort showroom at 999 Geary Street in January 1917. The partners may have developed doubts about Dort's long-term popularity, for they soon added, perhaps as insurance, the Liberty Six auto to their line. They soon dropped Liberty, but in February and March of 1918 they added two more brands, King and Mitchell (*San Francisco Chronicle*, February 13 and March 12, 1918). In these early years of the auto industry, no one could be certain which brands would remain popular for the long run.

With three brands to sell, Leach-Frawley needed a larger showroom, and at the end of March 1918, after acquiring the Mitchell brand, Leach-Frawley took over occupancy of 1415 Van Ness. Here they sold Dort, King, and Mitchell autos, but only briefly. By September 1918, M. A. Leach had dropped out of the partnership, and John W. Frawley had let go of the Dort and King brands. Operating as the Frawley Motor Company, he focused on selling the Mitchell brand. This auto brand was founded in Racine, Wisconsin in 1903, and was sold by Frawley at 1415 Van Ness during 1918-1922.

The recession of the early 1920s put an end to many national auto manufacturers as well as many local dealerships. The Frawley Motor Company went out of business in 1922, and the Mitchell Motor Car Company ended production the following year.

1924-1964: Used car salesrooms

Being wood frame in construction and of relatively modest dimensions, 1415 Van Ness was at a disadvantage compared to the many large, reinforced concrete auto showrooms that were built on Van Ness Avenue in the 1910s and 1920s. Those larger showrooms typically combined new autos sales, service, parts, auto storage, auto painting, and sometimes used auto sales uses in one building. By comparison, 1415 Van Ness had limited capacity. With its large, plate glass showroom windows it does seem to have been very well-suited for used auto sales, however. Used car sales rooms occupied the building for at least 33 years after the Frawley Motor Company went out of business. They included:

1923: Max Arnold. Arnold had recently sold new autos elsewhere, but probably sold used cars here.

1924: Henry H. McPike. It is known that McPike sold autos here in this year; they were probably used cars.

1927-1931: L. A. Pacheco

1932-1936: Ansel J. Schloss

1937: S&C Motors. The proprietors were A. E. Schlesinger and L. S. Clayburg. They also sold new Dodge and Plymouth autos on Pacific Avenue at this time.

(Continued next page.)

History – Occupants (continued)

1938-1939: Lloyd K. Hillman

1945; Hill Motors

1945-1946: Ellis Brooks. He sold used autos in San Francisco during 1939-1945; this was the last of his several used car salesrooms. Late in 1945 or in early 1946 he also began to sell Kaiser, a newly established brand of automobile, from this building. He then moved to a larger auto showroom, first at 1595 Van Ness, and then at 1395 Van Ness, where he sold mainly Chevrolet, and where his family is still in business.

1948: Goggin and Caselli

1949-1955: Biondi Auto Sales

1956: House of Automobiles, specialists in Cadillacs

1957-1964+: William L. Hughson. Hughson sold Ford and other brands of automobiles from 1903 until his death in 1967. During the 1950s-1960s he also maintained three used car salesrooms. The others were 2020-2034 Van Ness (1951-1959) and 1350 Van Ness (1957-1960 and 1962).

Note: This building had unknown occupants during 1925-1926, 1940-1944, and 1947-1949.

In summary, this building had two and one-half years of use as a clothing store, seven years of use as an auto repair shop, six years of use as a new auto showroom, and 34 years of use as a used car salesroom, with a total of 47 known years of auto-related use.

History – Context

Temporary commercial buildings of 1906 on or near Van Ness Avenue

Before the earthquake and fire of April 18-21, 1906, Van Ness Avenue was residential in character, with middle-class houses along the southern stretch of the avenue, residence hotels in the middle stretch between Ellis and Sutter streets, and mansions to the north. The east side of Van Ness, and some blocks on the west side of the avenue, either burned during the fire or were dynamited to create a fire break.

Downtown had burned, too, and so Van Ness Avenue became the city's new shopping district during the next few years, while downtown was being rebuilt. Van Ness had the advantage of being immediately adjacent to the wealthiest part of San Francisco that survived the earthquake and fire, i.e., Pacific Heights and the Western Addition. Surviving residences on the west side of the avenue were converted into stores, usually with new storefronts added to the fronts; and miles of one and two-story wood-framed buildings were constructed on both sides of the street. The city's best department, dry goods, clothing, and jewelry stores – The White House, the City of Paris, Davis-Schonwasser, D. Samuel's Lace House, Newman and Levison, Roos Bros., Andrews' Diamond Palace, and Shreve's – all relocated to Van Ness Avenue. Nestled among them were stationers, book stores, restaurants, tailors, and milliners.

(Continued next page.)

History – Context (continued)

The east-west streets between Van Ness and Polk Street, and Polk Street itself, were also developed, in part, with small, wood-framed commercial buildings in 1906. These, too, were probably considered to be temporary at the time they were built; once the shops that first occupied them removed to a rebuilt downtown, these buildings would likely be replaced by larger structures of brick or reinforced concrete. Probably no one at the time considered that some would still be standing over a hundred years later. How many wood-framed "temporary" buildings from 1906 survive on Van Ness, or immediately east of that avenue? Only two are known of at present. One is the building at 1415 Van Ness Avenue that is being evaluated here. The other is a small building at 1545 Pine Street that was initially a restaurant. It is possible that a few others still stand on the east-west streets between Van Ness and Polk.

Other buildings might be considered to share some aspects of this pattern of history. 819 Ellis Street (between Polk and Van Ness), for instance, is a brick building that was built for occupancy by Joseph Fredericks and Co., a major furniture store, during July-November, 1906 (at the same time that 1545 Pine was built). Although its materials and structure were considered permanent, the initial use was definitely temporary, for Fredericks and Co. soon moved to its new home on Union Square. 819 Ellis' façade has been altered, but other buildings in the study area of this report might have a similar history.

It might also be useful to mention that Fillmore street also became a major shopping district immediately after the earthquake and fire of 1906, albeit one subordinate to Van Ness Avenue. No survey has been made to determine which, if any, commercial buildings from that time and place still survive.

<u>The earliest automobile-related buildings in the study area</u>

1415 Van Ness Avenue was occupied by auto-related businesses beginning in 1910. Of the 100-plus buildings in the study area that had such use and still retain at least fair integrity, only one or two had auto-related use as early as this one did, namely:

> 550-590 Van Ness Avenue. This building was built as an automobile showroom in 1909.
>
> 1349 Larkin Street. This building was built as a private garage in 1909-1910, and did not have a public auto-related use until 1913.

Four other very early auto-related buildings have been heavily altered. They include: the northwest corner of Jackson and Polk (built in 1908 as a public garage), 2000 Van Ness Avenue (built as an automobile showroom in 1910), 1461 Pine Street (built in 1911 as a public garage), and 1200 Van Ness Avenue (built in 1911 as an auto showroom). Each has lost integrity as an auto-related building.

Many other buildings had auto-related use during the period 1913-1919 and retain good to high integrity.

(Continued next page.)

Auto repair shops in the study area

Over forty buildings that still stand in the study area have some history of use as an auto repair shop. (This number does not count auto showrooms where auto repair services were also offered.) Some of these have poor integrity, and some held auto repair shops for relatively brief periods of time. The best examples are listed below.

Four buildings held auto repair shops beginning in the 1910s, for periods of over 20 years (counting through the year 1964), and have good or high integrity. They qualify as the oldest examples of auto repair shops in the study area with good longevity:

155 Grove Street. Harry M. Nicolson's shop. This is the oldest building in the study area that was built (in 1915) as an auto repair shop. Integrity is good.

731-799 Van Ness Avenue. Auto repair use beginning in 1917, for 28 years. Integrity is high. This was a large multi-use building; it held a public garage and an auto painting shop in addition to an auto repair shop.

1465 Pine Street. A small auto repair shop, beginning in 1917, for at least 30 years. Integrity is good.

1644 Pine Street. Auto repair use beginning in 1918, for 46 years. Integrity is high.

Seven buildings held auto repair shops beginning in the 1920s, had over 30 years of such use (counting through 1964), and retain high integrity. These are exceptional examples of this building type, even though they are not as old as those dating to the 1910s. They include:

300 Grove Street. Built in 1920, it held auto repair shops for 38 years. The brick façade is exceptional, and almost all of the wooden windows remain in place.

650, 843, and 845 Polk Street. All built in 1920. These held auto repair shops for 40, 44, and 38 years, respectively. The latter was John Blausef's shop. These are small buildings on the scale of 1465 Pine.

824 Ellis Street. Auto repair use beginning in 1920, for 35 years. This was one of the larger and more architecturally distinguished auto repair shops in the study area.

1765 California Street. Hanni and Girerd's auto repair shop beginning in 1921, for 43 years. This was the largest auto repair shop in the study area.

55 Oak Street. Earl E. Robbins' shop. Auto repair use beginning in 1929, for 35 years.

Other auto repair shop buildings in the study area are of interest in other ways. They include:

1415 Van Ness Avenue (the building being evaluated here). Built as a clothing store, it was Eugene S. Miner's auto repair shop during 1910-1916. It is the earliest auto repair shop building in the study area.

1575-1595 Bush. This building held multiple auto uses, including repair shops, upon its completion in 1923.

550 Turk Street. Built as a garage, this building also held an auto repair shop for 21 years.

1540 Bush Street. Built as a battery shop, it was Eugene S. Miner's auto repair shop from 1927-1941.

(Continued next page.)

History – Context (continued)

1522-1524 Bush Street. This former auto supplies store held an auto repair shop for 34 years, beginning 1931.

730 Ellis Street. After long use as a garage, this held an auto repair shop for 29 years beginning in 1936.

In sum, 1415 Van Ness Avenue held an auto repair shop earlier than did any other building in the study area, by a margin of five years. Many buildings in the study area, however, held auto repair shops for much longer periods of time than this building did.

Auto showrooms in the study area

1415 Van Ness is one of nineteen extant buildings in the study area that held auto showrooms during the period 1909-1919; these qualify as the oldest auto showrooms in the study area. Of the nineteen, some held auto showrooms for only a few years and then became dedicated to other uses. Some have only marginal integrity. The best examples, in terms of integrity, longevity of use as an auto showroom, early date, and size or capacity are 1400 Van Ness, 1001 Polk, 1595 Van Ness, 1301-1305 Van Ness, and 1699 Van Ness. Each of these five also served as showrooms for major brands. The next best examples include 1412-1420 Van Ness, 550-590 Van Ness, 1350 Van Ness, and 2050 Van Ness.

Used auto salesrooms in the study area

Numerous buildings in the study area were occupied by used auto salesrooms at some point in their history. The surviving buildings in the study area that had the longest history of this use were:

850 Van Ness Avenue. Built 1919. From that date through at least 1964 this building was occupied by used car sales rooms. It is the only building in the study area that was so occupied for many years from the beginning of its history. This building has lost its cornice or pent roof and original window sash on the Van Ness side, and retains these features on its Ellis Street side.

700-710 Van Ness Avenue. Built 1915. After very brief use as a new car showroom, the ground floor of this building was a used car salesroom for over 35 years (1919-1964+). The one long-term occupant was Bank Chevrolet, which sold used cars here 1938-1960. Because its integrity is high, this is the best example of a used car salesroom in the study area.

1415 Van Ness Avenue (the building being evaluated here). Built as a clothing store, and devoted to auto uses from 1910 onward. Used car salesrooms occupied this building for 34 years during 1924-1964. Proprietors included William L. Hughson, who was also the city's pre-eminent Ford dealer.

Integrity

Alterations to this building include the loss of its crowning balustrade, the covering of most of the first story on Austin Street with stucco, the addition of pilasters to the first story piers, the use of new metal sash in all windows, and, as is typical in the study area, the loss of the early vehicle doors. The building retains its cornice, plaster ornament, second story flush siding, and the arrangement of its storefront windows. In spite of its alterations, the building still largely resembles the way it looked when built in

1906, and still looked in the 1970s. In sum, the building retains integrity of location and setting; while integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association are present but diminished.

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.*

Criterion 1 – Retail use, 1906-1909

This is the only surviving building on Van Ness Avenue that was built in 1906 as part of the city's temporary downtown, i.e., as part of the city's primary retail district, following the earthquake and fire. The building was occupied by prominent retail clothing stores from October 1906 to May 1909, primarily by Roos Brothers and also, briefly, by I. Magnin. At least one other building with a similar history (namely 1545 Pine Street) still survives on an east-west street close to Van Ness, but 1415 Van Ness is a much more important example of this pattern of history than 1545 Pine is. Although the "temporary downtown" on Van Ness Avenue lasted for only a brief period – less than three years – it is an important aspect of the city's history, closely connected with the earthquake and fire of 1906. The fact that 1415 Van Ness is the last remaining building of this type on Van Ness Avenue outweighs the fact that some substantial alterations have been made to the building. Overall, the building retains sufficient integrity to evoke this pattern of history. Accordingly, the building appears to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1, at the local level, for its history as part of the city's temporary downtown following the earthquake and fire of 1906. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1906-1909, the years the building had this use.

Criterion 1 – Automobile use, 1910-1964

This building had an auto-related use beginning in 1910, a very early date; only one extant building in the study area (at 550-590 Van Ness) had an earlier auto-related use. 1415 Van Ness also had an auto-related use for 47 years (through 1964, the end year of the period being studied), for excellent longevity of such use. In addition, among all buildings in the study area, this building had the earliest use as an auto repair shop, by a margin of five years. It is one of 19 buildings in the study area that had use as an auto showroom during the 1910s. It is one of three buildings in the study area that was occupied by a used car salesroom for at least 30 years. All factors considered (such as integrity and longevity), there are much better examples in the study area of auto repair shops and auto showrooms, and one or two better examples of used car sales rooms. Still, this building has one of the best histories of overall auto-related use in the study area, and despite the substantial alterations that it has undergone, it retains enough integrity to evoke this history. Accordingly, the building appears to be eligible for the California

Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1, at the local level, for its automobile-related history. The Period of Significance under this criterion is 1910-1964, the years the building had this use.

(Continued next page.)

Evaluation (continued)

Criterion 2

Three persons that were important in the auto-related history of the study area had businesses in this building. One was Eugene S. Miner, whose auto repair shop was here during 1910-1916. Miner was not, as far as is known, considered important in his own time, but he was one of San Francisco's first auto repairmen, and his career in this field lasted for over four decades. Another building in the study area, at 1540 Bush Street, held Miner's auto repair shop for a longer period of time (1927-1941), has better integrity than 1415 Van Ness does, and better represents his overall career.

Ellis Brooks sold cars here briefly (1945-1946). He is much better represented by his new auto showroom at 1595 Van Ness. William L. Hughson sold used cars here during 1957-1964. He is much better represented by three other buildings in the study area.

In sum, other buildings in the study area better represent the careers of each of these men, and so 1415 Van Ness does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3

Architecturally, this building is a pleasing example of the Classical Revival style, with a distinctive chamfered corner. The diminished integrity of this building, however, causes it to fall well below the level of quality of other commercial buildings in this study area. Thus, this building does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3.

Character defining features

The character defining features of this building are its height and width, the wooden siding in the second story, the main cornice with its modillions and brackets, the egg-and-dart molding and blank frieze beneath the cornice, the secondary cornice beneath the frieze, the plaster ornament and pilasters in the second story, the window framing in the second story, the cornice at the second floor level, the transom bars in the storefront windows, the mullions in the windows in the chamfered corner, and the low bulkheads at the base of the building. The metal window sash, the stucco wall surface on the Austin Street side, and the first story pilasters are not contributing elements to the historic fabric of the building.