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) 928 Van Ness Avenue

P1. Historic name of building (if any): Pacific Finance Corporation building
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 Location: *a: County San Francisco ☐ Not for Publication ■ Unrestricted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 928 Van Ness Avenue City San Francisco Zip 94109
d. UTM: Zone _____; _____mE/ _____ mN *e. Assessor's parcel #: Block 718, lot 13

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

This one-story, stucco-clad brick masonry building fills its 30-foot by 109-foot lot at the southeast corner of Van Ness Avenue and Olive Street. The building is chamfered at the corner, creating an entrance bay. Ornament is limited to two plain belt courses that stretch across the top of the building, leaving space for a blank frieze between them. The entrance with its transom and the two flanking windows all have modern steel sash and frames, whereas the other six bays of windows along Olive Street all have their original industrial steel sash.

*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 southeast
June 2009

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: ■ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1920; published building permit

*P7. Owner and Address:
STAN KWONG TRUST
211 GOUGH ST., 3RD FL
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94102

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

*P9. Date Recorded: November 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) 928 Van Ness Avenue

B1. Historic Name: Pacific Finance Corporation building

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: auto showroom B4. Present Use: cell phone sales room

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

***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Built in 1920. The entrance bay and the two adjoining windows were altered at an unknown date, with probable loss of ornament.

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

***B8. Related Features:**
none

B9a. Architect: John A. Ettler b. Builder: unknown

***B10. Significance: Theme** automobile industry **Area** San Francisco
Period of Significance n/a **Property Type** auto showroom **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 for the Bothin Real Estate Company as an investment by its house architect, John A. Ettler. Bothin Real Estate was owned by Henry E. Bothin, who invested his profits from a coffee and spice business into downtown real estate, which in turn allowed him to buy a controlling interest in the Judson Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of structural steel and iron. By 1906 Bothin owned 79 pieces of property. Rebuilding after the earthquake and fire, he retained John A. Ettler (by 1909) to design new buildings for these and other lots. Among other works by Ettler for Bothin were a public garage at 1444 Green (1909-1910; demolished) and an apartment building at 2222-2254 Polk (1913), both very fine.

This building, 928 Van Ness, was an auto showroom from 1920-1926 and 1933-1935. It then became the office for financing companies that almost certainly specialized in auto finance.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 3.)

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

***B12. References:**

Building and Engineering News, April 7, 1920, 17:3
Crocker-Langley and Polk's city directory, and PT&T reverse directory listings for occupants of this building, 1921-1964
1929 Sanborn insurance map ("auto sales")
"In Memoriam – Henry E. Bothin." *Pacific Service Magazine*, October 1923, p. 143.

B13. Remarks:

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

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch map with north arrow required)

History (continued)

Known occupants of this building include:

1920-1922: Kiel-Barnes Co. (auto sales)

1922: A. W. Rawling Co., distributors of Duesenberg autos. Duesenberg was popular during the 1920s as a powerful, high-priced automobile.

1923-1924: Rolls Royce of America (auto sales)

1925-1926: Roy Mires, Inc. (used auto sales)

1927-1932: unknown occupants

1933-1935: Murray Benton (used car sales)

1936: Fisher Finance Corporation

1937-1959: Pacific Finance Corporation

Integrity

The chamfered entrance and the immediately adjacent windows on Van Ness and Olive Street have been generally altered with modern sash and frames; while the other windows along Olive Street remain intact. In all likelihood ornamentation has also been removed from the top of the building and the area surrounding the entrance. In sum, this building retains integrity of location and setting, has diminished integrity of materials and workmanship, and has largely lost integrity of design, 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.*

This building had only brief or unknown occupancy by several businesses through 1936, and then had a long period of occupancy by a finance company, probably for auto loans. Two of the autos sold here, Duesenberg and Rolls Royce, were important brands, but they were sold here only during 1922-1924. Overall, neither the history nor the architecture is very compelling, and the integrity of the building is poor. For these reasons it does not appear to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources under criteria 1, 2, or 3.