



**STAFF REPORT**  
**CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS**

**For the Architectural Commission  
Meeting of July 21, 2010**

**TO:** Architectural Commission

**FROM:** Ryan Gohlich, Associate Planner

**SUBJECT:** PL 100 5282 - "**Thompson Hotel**"  
9360 Wilshire Boulevard  
Façade Remodel and Sign Accommodation

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

|                        |                                       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Applicant/Owner</b> | Mitch Dawson                          |
| <b>Address</b>         | 9360 Wilshire Boulevard               |
| <b>Project Name</b>    | Thompson Hotel                        |
| <b>Project Type</b>    | Façade Remodel and Sign Accommodation |

**Note:** As this staff report was being prepared, the applicant was contemplating some minor revisions to the facades outdoor dining barricade. These changes will be forwarded to the Commission and posted to the City's website as soon as they are available.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project is located on the south side of Wilshire Boulevard, at the intersection of South Crescent Drive and Wilshire Boulevard. The space is occupied by the Thompson Hotel, and the Commission previously approved a façade remodel to the building in 2006. All approvals were incorporated into the building façade and work has been completed since the middle of 2008. The applicant recently received approval from the Planning Commission to provide direct access to the ground floor restaurant and to establish an outdoor dining area on the public right-of-way. As a result, the applicant has submitted the subject Architectural Review application, which includes the

proposed façade remodel associated with the approvals granted by the Planning Commission, and also includes added signage and façade treatments.

The project includes the following components:

1. Installation of a two-sided, illuminated blade sign along the Wilshire Boulevard façade;
2. Installation of new landscaping at the hotel's open-air parking level, which is three levels above ground;
3. Partially covering the open-air parking level with a synthetic fabric to screen and soften the appearance of the parking area;
4. Installation of a horizontal canopy along portions of Wilshire Boulevard and South Crescent Drive, with 7-inch tall signage at the top of the canopy. The canopy would project 10 feet into the Wilshire Boulevard right-of-way and 7.5 feet over the South Crescent Drive right-of-way;
5. An outdoor dining barrier along Wilshire Boulevard;
6. Outdoor lighting sconces along Wilshire Boulevard to serve the outdoor dining area;
7. Scalloped up-lighting located behind existing metal banding along Wilshire Boulevard and South Crescent Drives;
8. A folding partition entry to the restaurant along Wilshire Boulevard; and
9. Two building identification signs located on the east and west sides of the rooftop penthouse structure, which houses the hotels stair and elevator shafts.

The façade modifications incorporate the following materials and finishes:

1. Black painted metal
2. Polished metal with a nickel finish
3. Wood clad outdoor dining enclosure
4. Synthetic fabric canopy
5. Wood tables and chairs

**Signage**

The proposed sign plan includes existing signage to remain, as well as new signage proposed on the ground floor and rooftop penthouse structure. Details of the proposed signage is as follows:

| <b>Sign Location</b>  | <b>Proposed Size</b>  | <b>Allowed Size</b>                                |
|---|---|--|
| Existing "Thompson" signage above vehicle entrance on Wilshire    | To remain, no changes proposed  | N/A  |
| Existing "Bond St." signage along Wilshire                        | To be removed   | N/A  |
| Above canopies on Wilshire and Crescent                           | 7" max height - Length unknown, as name of restaurant tenant is unknown | 7" max height - No restriction on length           |
| Blade sign on Wilshire  | 4'2" x 15'8.5"<br>65 square feet  | 2'6" x 8'<br>20 square feet max.                   |
| Building I.D. signs on east and west sides of penthouse structure | 6' x 19'2.25"<br>115 square feet  | 2% of building façade area<br>260 square feet max. |

**ANALYSIS**

The proposed remodel maintains the existing building materials and general theme previously approved by the Commission. Additionally, the design builds upon the modern appearance of the building's ground floor and enhances the pedestrian atmosphere of the area. Issues the Commission may wish to discuss with regard to the project are as follows:

1. The proposed blade sign along Wilshire Boulevard does not comply with current code requirements. The sign is proposed at approximately 65 square feet, whereas only 8 square feet is allowed by code (BHMC §10-4-604(D)(5)). If approved, the blade sign would need to be reduced to maximum dimension of 4' in any direction, and a maximum of 8 square feet. Staff has discussed this issue with the architect and anticipates that this sign design will likely be revisited by the architect and applicant and return to the Commission at a later date.
2. The submitted plans show outdoor dining along South Crescent Drive; however, the applicant has eliminated this component of the project. Elimination of the outdoor dining along South Crescent Drive does not affect the proposed canopy or signage on South Crescent Drive.

3. The proposed signage on the penthouse structure is an abstract design that represents the Thompson Hotel's branding logo. It is intended to be made from a dark colored metal that would be halo-lit with very low-key lighting at a height of approximately 100 feet. Due to the height and positioning of the penthouse structure, the signage would not be visible from the residential property immediately south of the hotel, but the signage and lighting may be visible from residential properties located to the southwest and southeast of the hotel. Although halo lighting is generally less invasive, the Commission may wish to discuss any increased lighting impacts that could result from the signage. Further, BHMC §10-4-315(B) requires that any illuminated signs within 200 feet of and facing a residential zone be illuminated at an intensity that does not exceed that of a public street light.
4. The submitted plans do not identify a color selection for the fabric canopy proposed for the purpose of screening the open-air parking level. The Commission may wish to discuss color options and provide the applicant with direction.
5. The applicant requests to change the location of a fine art sculpture located along its street frontage. While the Architectural Commission may make recommendations regarding this request, the applicant is required to obtain approval from the Fine Art Commission to move the previously approved sculpture.

## **CRITERIA**

Pursuant to Municipal Code Section 3-3010 the Architectural Commission may approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove the issuance of a building permit in any matter subject to its jurisdiction after consideration of the following criteria:

- (a) The plan for the proposed building or structure is in conformity with good taste and good design and in general contributes to the image of Beverly Hills as a place of beauty, spaciousness, balance, taste, fitness, broad vistas and high quality.***

As conditioned, the proposed facade remodel and signage creates a modern and sleek appearance while maintaining the materials and theme of the existing building.

As conditioned, the design appears in keeping with the quality of nearby shops and other businesses. The plan for the proposed storefront remodel and signage is in conformity with good taste and good design and in general contributes to the image of

Beverly Hills as a place of beauty, spaciousness, balance, taste, fitness, broad vistas and high quality.

***(b) The plan for the proposed building or structure indicates the manner in which the structure is reasonably protected against external and internal noise, vibrations, and other factors which may tend to make the environment less desirable.***

The proposed facade remodel and signage would not appear to impact the environment with respect to external or internal noise and would therefore not make the environment less desirable with respect to these factors.

***(c) The proposed building is not in its exterior design and appearance of inferior quality such as to cause the nature of the local environment to materially depreciate in appearance and value.***

As conditioned, the materials proposed for the facade remodel and signage do not appear to be inferior in quality or execution and would therefore not degrade the local environment in appearance or value.

***(d) The proposed building or structure is in harmony with the proposed developments on land in the General area, with the General Plan for Beverly Hills, and with any precise plans adopted pursuant to the General Plan.***

As conditioned, the proposed facade remodel and signage is in conformity with the prevailing uses in the general area and with other similar projects approved by the Commission. Furthermore, the overall composition and design of the facade would be in harmony with proposed or future uses in the area as would be allowed in compliance with the current General Plan for Beverly Hills, and with any precise plans adopted pursuant to the General Plan.

***(e) The proposed building or structure is in conformity with the standards of this Code and other applicable laws insofar as the location and appearance of the buildings and structures are involved.***

As conditioned, the proposed facade remodel and signage is in conformity with the standards of the Beverly Hills Municipal Code and other applicable laws.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the foregoing criteria and pending the information and conclusions that may result from testimony received during the Architectural Commission deliberations, staff recommends that the Architectural Commission approve the façade remodel subject to the following conditions:

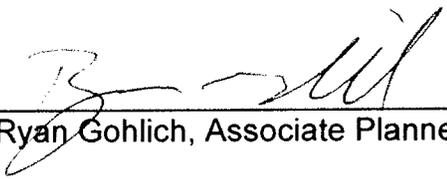
### **PROJECT SPECIFIC CONDITIONS**

1. The blade sign shall be reduced to a maximum size of 4 feet by 2 feet, for a total area of 8 square feet. Further, the sign shall not project more than 2.5 feet from the face of the building, and shall be located a minimum of 8 feet above the adjacent sidewalk. If the applicant chooses to return with an alternative proposal, it shall be reviewed by the Commission at a future meeting.
2. Signage above the canopies along Wilshire Boulevard and South Crescent Drive shall be limited to a maximum height of 7 inches. Further, such signage shall be constructed of individual metal letters - acrylic letters shall not be permitted.
3. The applicant shall obtain approval from the Fine Art Commission prior to moving or modifying any code-required fine art or sculptures.
4. Final plans shall be modified to eliminate outdoor dining along South Crescent Drive.

### **STANDARD CONDITIONS**

5. Final plans shall substantially conform to the plans submitted to and reviewed by the Architectural Commission on April 21, 2010.
6. This approval by the Architectural Commission is for design only; the project is subject to all applicable City regulations for the construction of the project (including zoning, building codes and Public Works requirements.)
7. Any future modifications to this approval shall be presented to staff for a determination as to whether the change may be approved by staff (minor) or requires review by the Commission. Changes made without City approval may be required to be restored to match the City approved plans.
8. Any projections within the public-right-of way shall be reviewed and approved by the Public Works and Transportation Department.
9. A copy of the City's approval letter shall be scanned onto the final plans.

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