Thompson Hotel

Existing

STAFF REPORT

CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

For the Architectural Commission
Meeting of August 18, 2010

TO: Architectural Commission

FROM: Ryan Gohlich, Associate Planner

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

Continued from Meeting of July 21, 2010

PROJECT INFORMATION

Applicant/Owner	Mitch Dawson on behalf of Thompson Hotels
Address	9360 Wilshire Boulevard
Project Name	Thompson Hotel
Project Type	Façade Remodel and Sign Accommodation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is located on the south side of Wilshire Boulevard, at the intersection of South Crescent Drive and Wilshire Boulevard, and is occupied by the Thompson Hotel. The project includes façade modifications, an outdoor dining enclosure with canopy, new landscaping, and a revised sign plan. The project was previously reviewed by the Commission at its July 21, 2010 meeting. At that meeting the Commission approved all design elements from the canopy down, but requested that all lighting, signage, and landscaping be returned for further review and study. Consequently, the applicant has prepared revised plans to address the outstanding design issues. The revised plans include the following items that were not previously reviewed, as well as some modifications/clarifications to the previous plans as follows:

1. Installation of outdoor lighting sconces along the Wilshire Boulevard street level.
2. Lighting integrated into the underside of the previously approved canopy.
3. Two restaurant identification signs built into the canopy.

4. Scalloped up-lighting behind the building's existing metal banding.
5. Installation of a lighted, vertical banner sign.
6. Installation of landscaping vines at the parking level.
7. Installation of fruitless olive trees at the parking level.
8. Installation of a partial soft cover at the parking level.
9. Two backlit building identification signs on the rooftop penthouse structure.

The façade modifications incorporate the following materials and finishes:

1. Black painted metal
2. Polished metal with a nickel finish
3. Wood cladded 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:

Sign Location	Proposed Size	Allowed Size
Existing "Thompson" signage above vehicle entrance on Wilshire	To remain, no changes proposed. 11.5 square feet	11.5 square feet as previously permitted
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
Banner sign on Wilshire	2'6" x 13'7" 40.7 square feet	Unknown, additional information to be provided by staff.
Building I.D. signs on east and west sides of penthouse structure	6' x 19'2.25" 115 square feet	2% of building façade area 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 previously reviewed plan included a blade sign along Wilshire Boulevard that did not meet code. As a result, the applicant has modified the sign to be a "banner sign." The sign regulations contained within the zoning code do allow for banner signs, but more restrictive regulations applicable to signs that project from buildings may apply as well. The more restrictive regulations may result in a substantially smaller sign than what is contained in the submitted plans. Consequently, staff is conducting research to determine which regulations are applicable, and further information will be provided to the Commission during the meeting. Because additional research is required to determine code compliance, staff is not making a recommendation on the banner sign at this time.

2. 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.

3. 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.

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 façade 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. Signage above the canopies along Wilshire Boulevard and South Crescent Drive shall be limited to a maximum letter height of 7 inches. Further, such signage shall be constructed of individual metal letters - acrylic letters shall not be permitted.

2. The applicant shall obtain approval from the Fine Art Commission prior to moving or modifying any code-required fine art or sculptures.

STANDARD CONDITIONS

3. Final plans shall substantially conform to the plans submitted to and reviewed by the Architectural Commission on August 18, 2010.

4. 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.)

5. 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.

6. Any projections within the public-right-of way shall be reviewed and approved by the Public Works and Transportation Department.

7. A copy of the City's approval letter shall be scanned onto the final plans.

Ryan Gohlich, Associate Planner