City of Beverly Hills
Planning Division
455 N. Rexford Drive Beverly Hills, CA 90210
TEL. (310) 285-1141 FAX. (310) 858-5966

Architectural Commission Report

Meeting Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2015

Subject: **BLÜ LUXURY APARTMENTS (PL1509420)**
8601 Wilshire Boulevard
Request for approval of building identification signage and a sign accommodation to allow a business identification sign to project above the top surface of a marquee, awning, canopy, or similar architectural element. The Commission will also consider adoption of a Categorical Exemption, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.
(Continued from the October 21, 2015 Architectural Commission meeting.)

Project agent: Chris O'Connell – Premier Sign Solutions

Recommendation: Conduct public hearing to discuss the project details and provide the applicant with an approval, as conditioned.

REPORT SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting review and approval of building identification signage and a sign accommodation to allow a business identification sign to project above the top surface of a marquee, awning, canopy, or similar architectural element for Blü Luxury Apartments located at 8601 Wilshire Boulevard. The project was previously reviewed by the Architectural Commission at its meeting on July 15, 2015. At that meeting, the Commission indicated that the design warranted further review and directed the project to be restudied and returned to a future meeting. The comments provided by the Commission related primarily to the appropriateness of the proposed façade paint colors and the effective use of the proposed signage as a billboard. An applicant-prepared *Response to Comments* has been provided in Attachment B of this report.

As a result of the Commission's comments, the applicant has modified the design, which includes the following components:

<u>Building Identification Signage</u>

- One (1) 34.84 SF non-illuminated, painted building identification sign on the east elevation, and;
- One (1) 78.78 SF non-illuminated, painted building identification sign on the west elevation.
  Both building identification signs were previously proposed at 144 SF each.

Pursuant to Beverly Hills Municipal Code (BHMC) §10-4-605, when a building equals or exceeds one hundred feet (100') in height above grade, one building identification sign shall be permitted on each side of the building, including those that do not front on a public street. Any such sign shall be located above a height of seventy five feet (75') above grade.

Additionally, the total building identification sign area on any one side of a building shall not exceed two percent (2%) of the vertical surface area of such side. The maximum sign area for the east elevation is

Attachment(s):
A. Previously Proposed Staff Report and Plans (7/15/15)
B. Applicant-prepared *Response to Comments*
C. Project Design Plans
D. DRAFT Approval Resolution

Report Author and Contact Information:
Cindy Gordon, AICP, Associate Planner
(310) 285-1191
cgordon@beverlyhills.org

179.7 SF and the maximum sign area for the west elevation is 153 SF. As such, both of the proposed building identification signs are in compliance with the standards set forth by the BHMC.

Note: The proposed façade painting has been fully removed from the project scope.

Sign Accommodation (projecting above the top surface, et al.)

- One (1) halo-illuminated business identification sign, a total of 17" in height, projecting above the entry canopy.

Pursuant to Beverly Hills Municipal Code (BHMC) §10-4-306, the Architectural Commission may approve a sign accommodation to allow signs, not to exceed fourteen inches (14") in height, to project above the top surface of a marquee, awning, canopy, or similar architectural element.

However, the proposed business identification sign must be reduced by a minimum of three inches (3") so as to comply with the standards set forth in the BHMC. A project-specific condition has been added to the draft approval resolution (Attachment D) indicating that requirement.

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

The proposed building identification signs have been improved over the first iteration as they more appropriately complement the building and do not overwhelm the existing architecture. However, each sign could benefit from a reduced sign area to better fit within the areas they are proposed. The reduced sign area would also allow for the signs to be spaced further from the building edge and incorporate necessary "breathing room" to avoid sign tension.

Additionally, while the building identification sign on the east elevation is centered on the façade, it is recommended that it be centered upon a window to better work with the modulation and pattern of the building itself as opposed to a dimensional width.

Project-specific conditions have been included in the draft approval resolution (Attachment D) based on this analysis; however, the Commission may wish to amend, add, or remove any project-specific conditions as necessary to make the findings for approval.

ZONING CODE COMPLIANCE

Applications for design review are preliminarily evaluated for compliance with the zoning code. Applicants are encouraged and have the option of requesting a comprehensive review separate and apart from this application. Formal compliance review will occur when a building permit application is filed (plan check). The applicant has been advised that changes during plan check may require revisions and subsequent approval from the Architectural Commission or staff, as appropriate.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The subject project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA – Public Resources Code §§21000 – 21178), pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines in that the project includes the review of building design, colors and materials to the façade of the building, front yard landscaping or minor low-scaled accessory structures, such as fences or walls. It can be seen with

certainty that there is no possibility that the subject activity could result in a significant effect on the environment. The project has also been reviewed and found not be a historic resource. The existing improvements to be demolished or altered were not designed by an architect or builder identified on the City's Master Architect list and the site and improvements are not listed on the City's historic resource inventory.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND NOTIFICATION

Public outreach and notification was not required for this project.

Attachment A
Previously Proposed Staff Report and Plans
(7/15/15)

City of Beverly Hills
Planning Division
455 N. Rexford Drive Beverly Hills, CA 90210
TEL. (310) 285-1141 FAX. (310) 858-5966

Architectural Commission Report

Meeting Date: Wednesday, July 15, 2015

Subject: **BLÜ LUXURY APARTMENTS (PL1509420)**
8601 Wilshire Boulevard
Request for approval of a façade modification, building identification signage, and a sign accommodation for multiple business identification signs. The Commission will also consider adoption of a Categorical Exemption, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Project agent: Chris O'Connell – Premier Sign Solutions

Recommendation: Conduct public hearing to discuss the project details and provide the applicant with an approval, as conditioned.

REPORT SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting review and approval of a façade modification, building identification signage, and a sign accommodation for multiple business identification signs for Blü Luxury Apartments located at 8601 Wilshire Boulevard. The project includes the following components:

Façade Modification

- Dark blue, painted horizontal banding at the ground floor and at the façade area located above the uppermost windows.

Building Identification Signage

- One (1) 144 SF non-illuminated building identification sign on the east elevation, and;
- One (1) 144 SF non-illuminated building identification sign on the west elevation.

The building identification signs will be created by a non-painted void in the dark blue, painted horizontal banding with the existing white-painted brick showing through as the lettering.

Pursuant to Beverly Hills Municipal Code (BHMC) §10-4-605, when a building equals or exceeds one hundred feet (100') in height above grade, one building identification sign shall be permitted on each side of the building, including those that do not front on a public street. Any such sign shall be located above a height of seventy five feet (75') above grade.

Additionally, the total building identification sign area on any one side of a building shall not exceed two percent (2%) of the vertical surface area of such side. The maximum sign area for the east elevation is 179.7 SF and the maximum sign area for the west elevation is 153 SF. As such, both of the proposed building identification signs are in compliance with the standards set forth by the BHMC.

(continued on next page)

Attachment(s):
A. Detailed Design Description and Materials (Applicant Prepared)
B. Project Design Plans
C. DRAFT Approval Resolution

Report Author and Contact Information:
Cindy Gordon, AICP, Associate Planner
(310) 285-1191
cgordon@beverlyhills.org

Sign Accommodation (multiple business identification signs)

- Four (4) 24 SF façade-mounted, non-illuminated banner signs consisting of a vinyl material with aluminum supports painted to match the adjacent façade color
  (sign copies: "blü"; "luxury"; "living"; and "blü")
- Existing: One (1) 0.85 SF entry sign (sign copy: "blü")

TOTAL SIGN AREA: 96.85 SF

Pursuant to BHMC §10-4-604, the Architectural Commission may approve a sign accommodation to allow multiple business identification signs if the total area of all business identification signs does not exceed the lesser of: 1) 100 square feet; 2) the total business sign area otherwise permitted by this section, or; 3) 10% of the vertical surface area of that portion of the wall below 20'-0". As such, based on a storefront length of 102'-6" and a maximum sign area of 100 SF, the proposed business identification signage is within the maximum standards set forth in the BHMC.

Additionally, pursuant to §10-4-320 of the BHMC, any flag/banner/pennant that exceeds 12 SF must be reviewed by the Architectural Commission. All banner signs are included in the maximum business identification sign area allowance.

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

The proposed dark blue, painted horizontal banding appears as an unnecessary contrast to the existing building that may detract from the existing architecture and otherwise light building coloration. The portion at the ground floor will create an undesirable dark wall at the pedestrian level when combined with the pre-existing teal-tinted glazing; the portion above the uppermost windows creates an unnecessary cap to the building. These concerns may be alleviated by utilizing a lighter color that is more in keeping with the existing building coloration.

Additionally, the building identification signs are overly large and dominate the upper portions of the building. Given the visibility of the proposed location from various distances, it is recommended that the signs be reduced substantially in size to alleviate any adverse impact on the Wilshire Boulevard corridor and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Furthermore, the banner signs located on the street-facing portion of the building appear to clutter the façade and should be reduced in both quantity and size so as to provide a more pedestrian-oriented aesthetic.

Project-specific conditions have been included in the draft approval resolution (Attachment D) based on this analysis; however, the Commission may wish to amend, add, or remove any project-specific conditions as necessary to make the findings for approval.

ZONING CODE COMPLIANCE

Applications for design review are preliminarily evaluated for compliance with the zoning code. Applicants are encouraged and have the option of requesting a comprehensive review separate and apart from this application. Formal compliance review will occur when a building permit application is

filed (plan check). The applicant has been advised that changes during plan check may require revisions and subsequent approval from the Architectural Commission or staff, as appropriate.

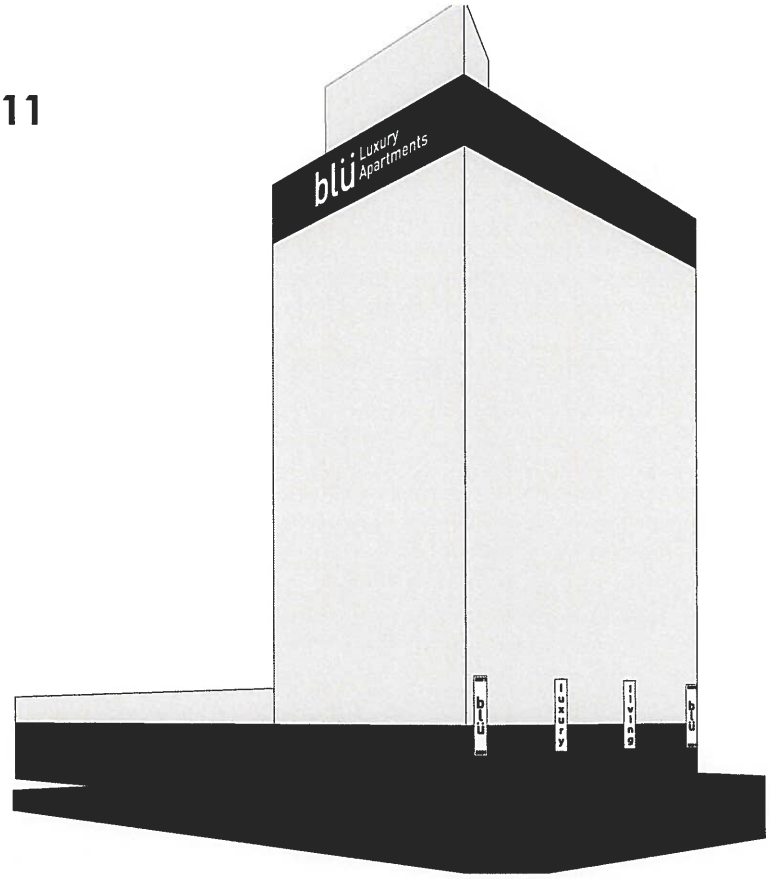
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

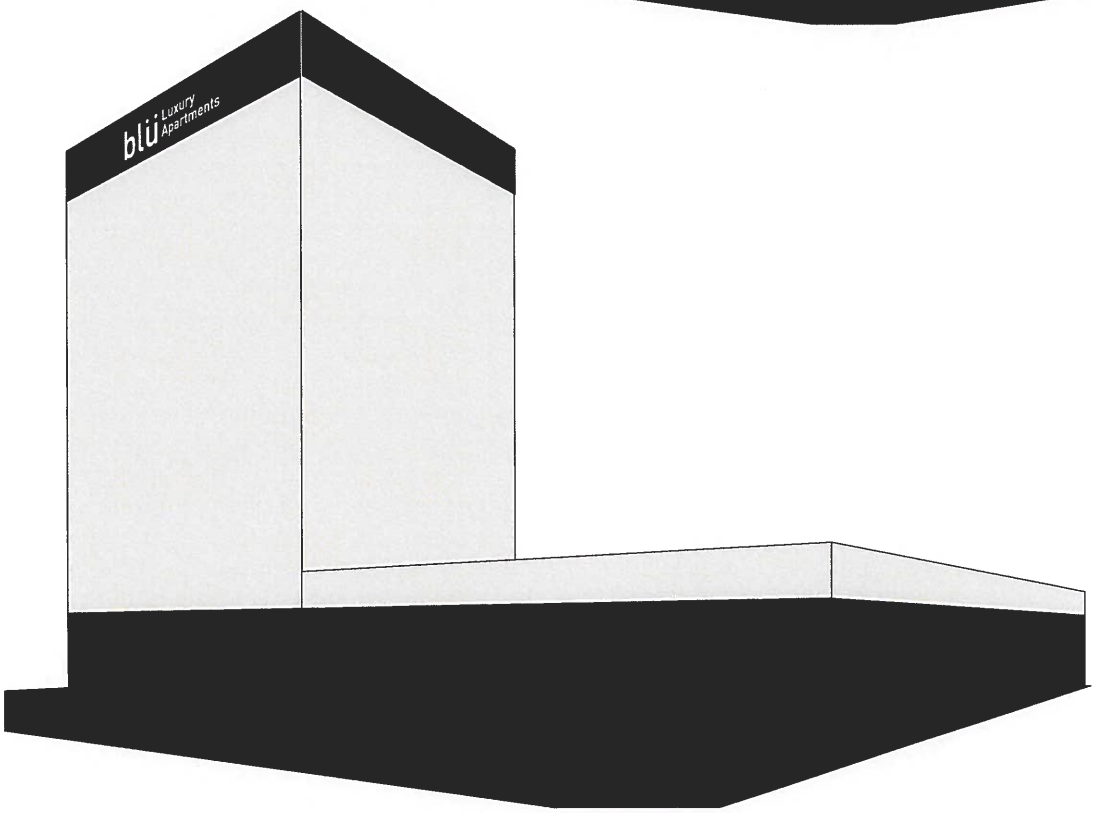
The subject project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA – Public Resources Code §§21000 – 21178), pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines in that the project includes the review of building design, colors and materials to the façade of the building, front yard landscaping or minor low-scaled accessory structures, such as fences or walls. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the subject activity could result in a significant effect on the environment. The project has also been reviewed and found not be a historic resource. The existing improvements to be demolished or altered were not designed by an architect or builder identified on the City's Master Architect list and the site and improvements are not listed on the City's historic resource inventory.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND NOTIFICATION

Public outreach and notification was not required for this project.

Blu Beverly Hills
8601 Wilshire Blvd
Beverly Hills, CA 90211





PREMIUM SIGN SOLUTIONS

Attachment B

Applicant-prepared *Response to Comments*

Addendums to

Page 3 2 c

Upon the recommendation of the Architectural Commission we have done a restudy of our options to brand 8601 Wilshire via signage while adhering to good taste and good design.

Chief of among the Commission's concerns with our original plan were:

1. The size, color and location of the blue band

2. The copy included on the signage to be less of a billboard

3. The use of banners in front of the building

4. Overall connection to the building's architecture

To address these concerns, the new project scope is as follows:

We are proposing two elegant, hand-painted Building Identification Signs at 8601 Wilshire, a building that exceeds 100' in height above grade. Height of signs to be located 116.5' above grade.

Copy: blu beverly hills

Paint color: Dunn Edwards Ink Blotch. We selected this color for it's color proximity to the building's existing window tint coloring. It is lighter than the color we proposed previously while not being too light as to prevent viewers from seeing the sign altogether.

We are also proposing installing 14" Halo Lit Channel Letters on the overhang above the building's main entrance on Wilshire Blvd. Channel Letters to read "8601 blu Beverly hills"

Channel Letters will be fabricated as follows: .063 clear acrylic backs, 3" deep .040 aluminum returns, Letters to be installed on a 4" .063 brushed aluminum raceway. Letters to painted Dunn Edwards Ink Blotch to match the sign being painted on the east and west walls.

Page 6 A1

Upon the recommendation of the Architectural Commission we have done a restudy of our options to brand 8601 Wilshire via signage while adhering to good taste and good design.

Chief of among the Commission's concerns with our original plan were:

1. The size, color and location of the blue band

2. The copy included on the signage to be less of a billboard

3. The use of banners in front of the building

4. Overall connection to the building's architecture

To address these concerns, our new proposal calls for:

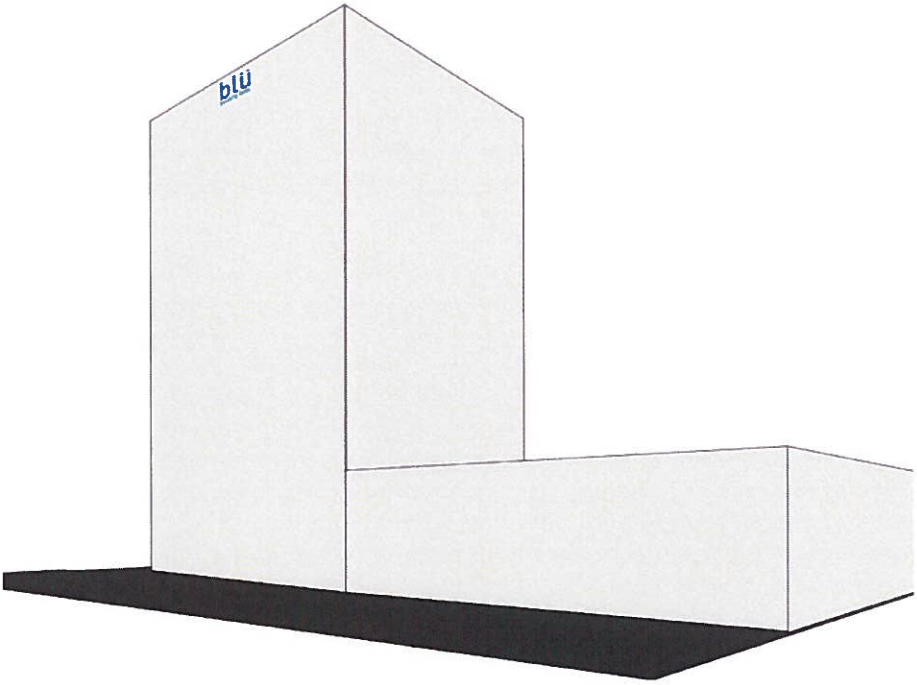
1. Removing the blue band from our design altogether. A change in color more closely resembling the building's existing teal-colored window tint. It is lighter than the color we proposed previously while not being too light as to prevent viewers from seeing the sign altogether. A change in proposed location to an area that architecturally is more eye-pleasing.

2. A change in Copy to "blu beverly hills" – intended to both pay homage to the great city of Beverly Hills, and carry the building's existing branding to its signage. Of note, the web URL for blu is indeed www.blubeverlyhills.com. We believe this change to blu Beverly hills is consistent with how the building is commonly referred to while not being a billboard for what it is.

3. We have selected an elegant solution to the signage in the building's front. We are proposing rear illuminated blue channel letters created using the shade of blue "Ink Blotch" that is featured in the building's hand-painted name. Further, we will construct the channel letters with a brushed aluminum raceway to add to their elegant nature.

4. In order to create a design more deeply in tune with the building's present modern architecture, we made sure our selection of paint color resembled the colors already in use on the building. Further, for our choice of illuminated signage, the channel letter design utilizing brushed aluminum returns is both stately and prominent while also quite modern.

Attachment C
Project Design Plans



PREMIUM SIGN SOLUTIONS

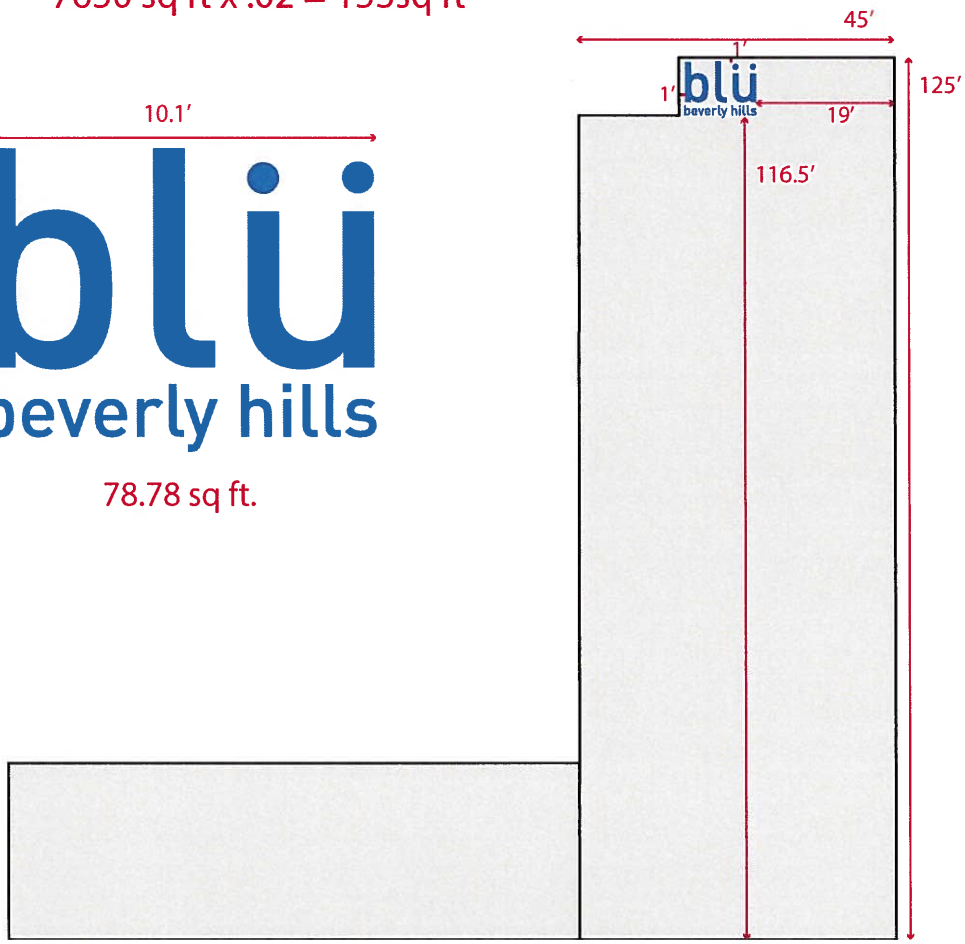
Blu Architectural Commission Application

Building ID Sign Elevation and Sq Footage

West wall

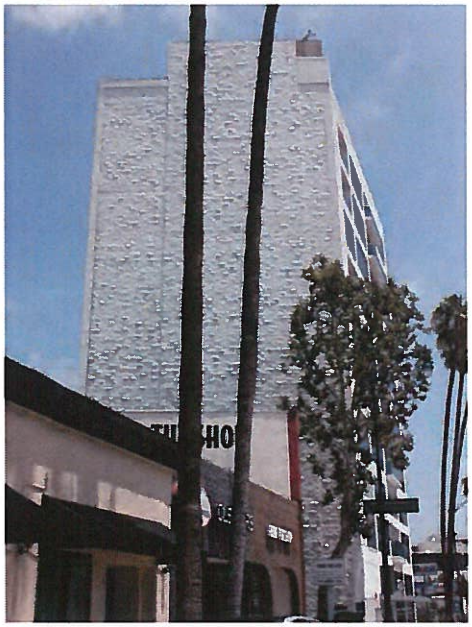
7650 sq ft x .02 = 153sq ft

78.78 sq ft.



Lettering paint color: Dunn Edwards Ink Blotch

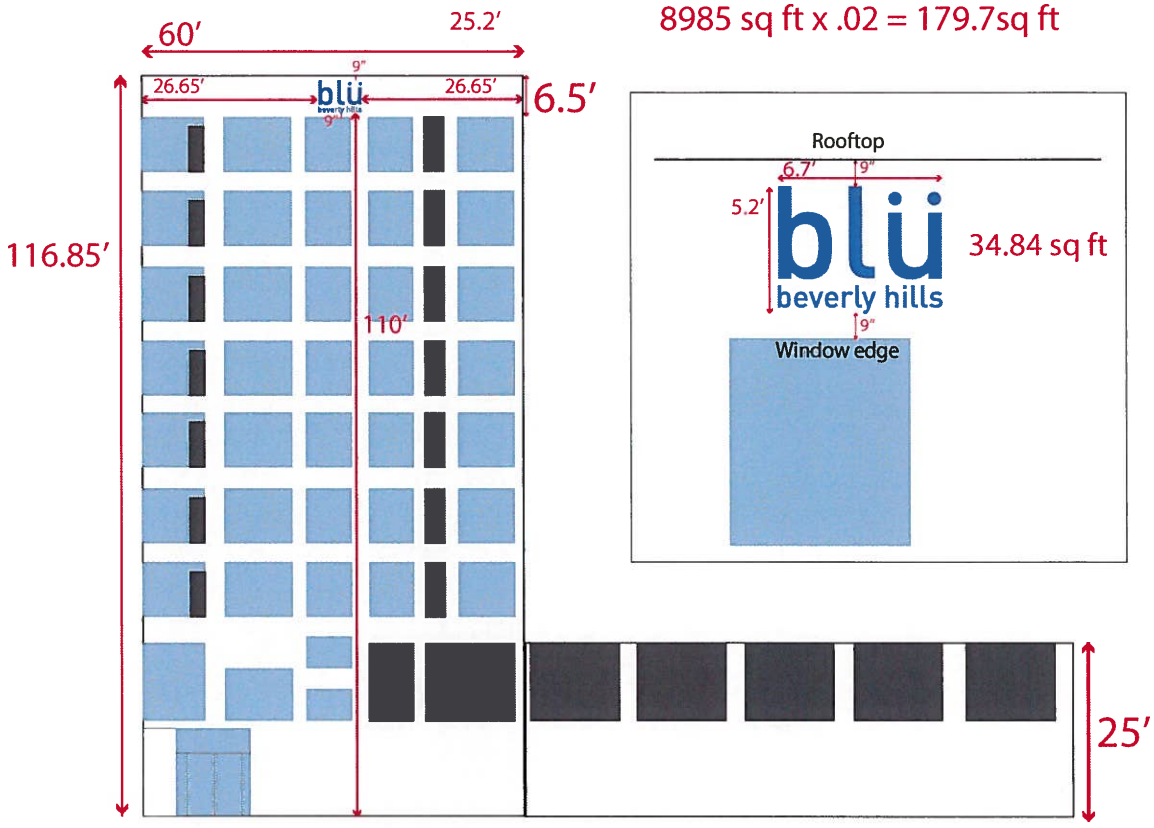
Existing Facade



PREMIUM SIGN SOLUTIONS

Building ID Sign Elevation and Sq Footage

East wall



Lettering paint color: Dunn Edwards Ink Blotch

Existing Facade

PREMIUM SIGN SOLUTIONS

Paint Renderings

West Wall

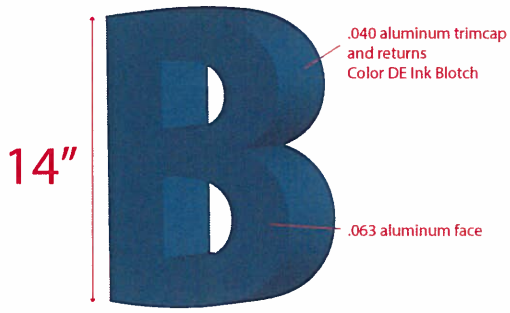
East Wall

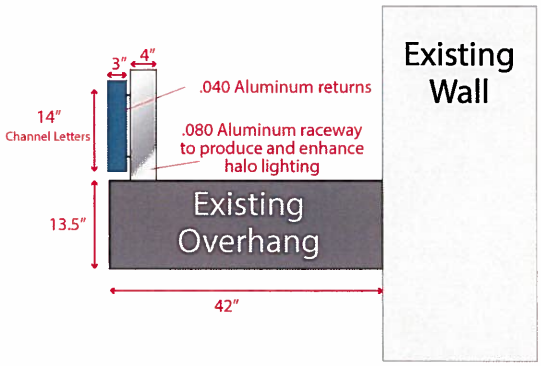
Lettering paint color: Dunn Edwards Ink Blotch

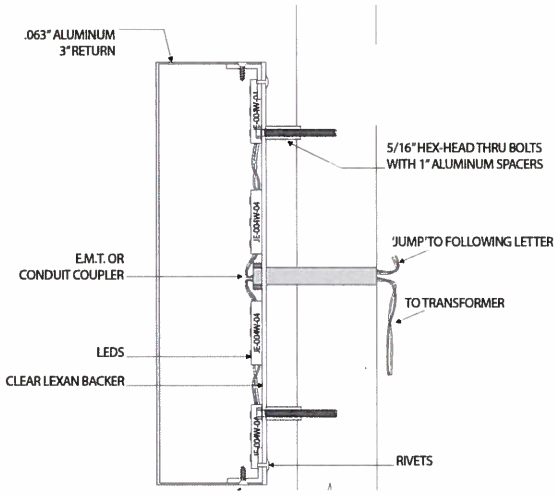
Note: Renderings indicate scope of project to include the painting of concrete walls only. Windows with existing tint are untouched in this project.

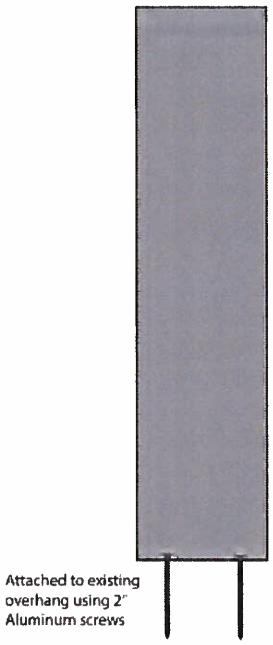
Channel Letter Elevation and Square Footage

South Wall









37.25 Sq Ft

PREMIUM SIGN SOLUTIONS

South Wall Channel Letter Render

Before

Removal of existing channels and ID sign and installation of new halo-lit channel letters.

After

Attachment D

DRAFT Approval Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. AC XX-15

RESOLUTION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS CONDITIONALLY APPROVING AN ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW PERMIT TO ALLOW BUILDING IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE AND A SIGN ACCOMMODATION TO ALLOW A BUSINESS IDENTIFICATION SIGN TO PROJECT ABOVE THE TOP SURFACE OF A MARQUEE, AWNING, CANOPY, OR SIMILAR ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENT FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 8601 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD (PL1509420 – BLÜ LUXURY APARTMENTS).

The Architectural Commission of the City of Beverly Hills hereby finds, resolves and determines as follows:

Section 1. Chris O'Connell, Premium Sign Solutions, agent, on behalf of the property owner, Retirement Concepts Developments, and the tenant, Blü Luxury Apartments, (Collectively the "Applicant"), has applied for architectural approval to allow building identification signage and a sign accommodation to allow a business identification sign to project above the top surface of a marquee, awning, canopy, or similar architectural element for the property located at 8601 Wilshire Boulevard.

Section 2. Beverly Hills Municipal Code Article 30, Chapter 3 of Title 10, authorizes the Architectural Commission the authority to approve, approve with conditions, or deny design-related aspects of projects located in the city's commercial and multi-family districts, subject to findings set forth in Beverly Municipal Code Section 10-3-3010.

Section 3. Consistent with Beverly Hills Municipal Code Section 10-3-3010, this resolution documents the official action of the Architectural Commission with respect to the project.

Section 4. The subject project has been reviewed pursuant to the provisions set forth in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA – Public Resource Code Sections 21000, *et seq.*), the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15000 *et seq.*), and the city's

local CEQA Guidelines. The subject project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA – Public Resources Code §§21000 – 21178), pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines in that the project includes the review of building design, colors and materials to the façade of the building, front yard landscaping or minor low-scaled accessory structures, such as fences or walls. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the subject activity could result in a significant effect on the environment. Additionally, projects which involve the minor alteration of private structures, and no expansion of an existing use, are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 (Class 1 – Existing Facilities) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The Project represents a minor alteration of an existing private structure in the form of façade painting, building identification signage, and business identification signage; no expansion of an existing use is proposed. Therefore, the Project has been determined to be exempt from further environmental review. The project has also been reviewed and found to not be a historic resource. The existing improvements to be demolished or altered were not designed by an architect or builder identified on the City's Master Architect list and the site and improvements are not listed on the City's historic resource inventory.

Section 5. The Architectural Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing on July 15, 2015 and November 18, 2015 at which time oral and documentary evidence was received concerning the application.

Section 6. Based upon the evidence presented at the hearings, including the staff report(s), oral and written testimony, the Architectural Commission hereby makes the following findings:

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. Specifically, the project incorporates an appropriate balance of color, high quality materials and appropriate architectural design principles to reinforce the city's urban form and promote the image of Beverly Hills.

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 environmental less desirable. The proposed project is proposed to be constructed using contemporary building materials and practices, and, as conditioned, compliant with all applicable building codes, including standards that protect against unwanted noise and vibrations.

C. Proposed building or structure 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. Specifically, the commission has reviewed the design and construction materials proposed for the project, which incorporates contemporary building material of known quality and durability. Moreover, the project design is appropriate to the building and surrounding improvements and is well matched to the selected materials.

D. As conditioned, 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. The proposed project complies with the applicable goals and policies set forth in the general plan, and, as conditioned, designed in a manner that complies with local ordinances. The overall design is consistent with and appropriate to other improvements in the general vicinity.

E. The proposed development 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 project will be designed in compliance with all applicable regulations.

F. The proposed development is designed in a manner that protects and preserves those exterior elements of the building which the Planning Commission found contributed to the determination of the project as a "character contributing building" in accordance with section 10-2-707 of this title. The proposed project does not include a request and has not been determined by the Planning Commission to be a project that qualifies as a "character contributing building" under section 10-2-707. Therefore, this finding is not applicable to the subject project.

Section 7. Based on the foregoing, the Architectural Commission hereby grants the request defined in this resolution subject to the following conditions:

Project-Specific Conditions

1. The two (2) building identification signs shall be reduced in size and spaced further from the building edges, consistent with the recommendations set forth by the Architectural Commission, and subject to final review and approval by City staff.
2. The building identification sign on the east elevation shall be revised to be centered upon a façade window, subject to final review and approval by City staff.
3. The business identification sign shall be reduced to a height not to exceed fourteen inches (14").

Standard Conditions

4. **Revised Plan Submittal.** For all projects that are approved with project-specific conditions, a revised plan set that has fully incorporated all such conditions shall be submitted to the project planner,

both in hard copy format and in electronic format, prior to submitting for the building permit plan check process.

5. **Architectural Approval**. Project approval is for the design-related aspects of the project only. No approval is implied or granted with regard to applicable city zoning or technical codes, which may require review and approval from other city commissions or officials.

6. **Compliance with Municipal Code**. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate compliance with all applicable provisions of the city's municipal code and applicable conditions imposed by any discretionary review approval.

7. **Compliance with Special Conditions**. Any special conditions that require approval by the Director of Community Development, or designee, shall be submitted to the staff liaison to the commission within fourteen (14) days of approval or prior to submittal of the plan check review application, whichever is greater.

8. **Project Rendering**. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall incorporate into the building permit set of plans, an updated color rendering of all building facades. The quality and detail of the rendering shall be subject to approval from the Director of Community Development, or designee, and shall include sufficient design information to evaluate project compliance during construction.

9. **Approval Resolution**. A copy of the signed resolution of approval shall be scanned onto the cover sheet(s) of the building permit set of plans.

10. **Substantial Compliance with Approved Plans**. The Director of Community Development, or designee, shall determine if changes to the approved project are in substantial compliance with the

commission's action. This determination shall be subject to applicable fees and charges. A substantial modification to the approved project requires approval from the Architectural Commission.

11. **Validity of Permits**. The rights granted by this approval shall remain valid for three (3) years from the date of approval, unless extended pursuant to Beverly Hills Municipal Code Section 10-3-207.

Section 8. The Secretary of the Architectural Commission shall certify to the passage, approval, and adoption of this resolution, and shall cause this resolution and its certification to be entered in the administrative record maintained by the Community Development Department.

Section 9. Decisions of the Architectural Commission may be appealed to the City Council within fourteen (14) days of the final action by filling a written appeal and paying appropriate fees with the City of Beverly Hills City Clerk.

Approved as to Form and Content:

Adopted: November 18, 2015

Ryan Gohlich, Commission Secretary
Community Development Department

Andrea Gardner Apatow, Chair
Architectural Commission