

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION



DATE: February 11, 2020

TITLE: Design Review No. 20-1: An Application to Revise the Plans for the Spa Area and Treatment Rooms Located at the Two Bunch Palms Resort at 67425 Two Bunch Palms Trail

Prepared by: Scott Taschner, Senior City Planner

Reviewed by: Rebecca Deming, Community Development Director

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Staff Report
- 2) Entertain questions of Staff from the Planning Commission;
- 3) Open Public Hearing;
- 4) Take testimony from Applicant;
- 5) Take public testimony for those in favor;
- 6) Take public testimony from those opposed;
- 7) Take public testimony from those in a neutral position;
- 8) Opportunity for Applicant rebuttal;
- 9) Close the Public Hearing
- 10) Planning Commission discussion and questions to Staff; and
- 11) Approve the revised plans for the spa and treatment facilities at the Two Bunch Palms resort located at 67245 Two Bunch Palms Trail.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Todd Lynch, on behalf of the Two Bunch Palms Resort, is requesting a revision to the previously approved plans for the spa area and private treatment rooms on the south side of the hotel including 20 new standalone treatment rooms (salt cave, mud rooms, etc.). The project also consists of installing new landscaping (buffers and a palm grove), new fire pits, a new hot tub and pool, and new fire access road (ENG-19-10) to provide access to the new structures.

BACKGROUND

In 2007 the City Council approved a specific plan, general plan amendment, a zone map amendment, a tentative tract map and an environmental impact report for the expansion of the Two Bunch Palm Resort project. The expansion included entitlements to allow for future development of the site with up to 738 residential units, up to 600 visitor-serving units, and 121,000 square feet of additional commercial space on approximately 290 acres.



In 2017, the City approved applications for tenant improvements to the hotel (interior renovations) and a Design Review Application for development of a new vehicle entry area a new guard shack and a new spa building with private detached treatment rooms to the rear (south side) of the property.

In December of 2019, the applicant indicated that they would like to make changes to the plans and provided an explanation of the changes and work to be performed. This letter is attached as Exhibit No. 3

SITE INFORMATION

The Two Bunch Palms project is located in the City of Desert Hot Springs in Riverside County, California. The project site is bounded by Camino Campanero on the south, Verbena Drive on the west, Hacienda Drive and Rochelle Road on the north, and Miracle Hill Road on the west. The existing Two Bunch Palms Resort and Spa is located in the central part of the project area, to the south of Two Bunch Palms Trail. Two Bunch Palms Trail bisects the project site. The zoning, land use designations, and current uses for surrounding adjacent parcels are as follows:

SETTING

The Zoning, General Plan Land-Use designations, and current land uses for surrounding properties are as follows:

Table 1: Surrounding Land Uses (to the proposed 29 homes)

	<u>Zoning & General Plan Designations</u>	<u>Current Land-Use</u>
North	Residential Visitor Serving (Low Density)	Vacant Land (within Specific Plan)
West	Residential Visitor Serving, (Medium Density & High Density)	Vacant Land
South	Residential Low Density	Vacant Land
East	Residential Low Density & Residential Visitor Serving (Low Density)	Single Family Homes & Vacant Land

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT ANALYSIS

Zoning Consistency

The project consists of revisions to the previously approved plans for the spa facilities ancillary treatment rooms on the southeast side of the hotel including 19 new standalone treatment rooms and a salt cave building which will replace the existing treatment rooms. The project also consists adding certain other amenities and features such as a new pool, hot tub, fire pits, a pond, new landscaping, and a new pergola, as well as some demolition work and renovations to a few of existing buildings. Staff has reviewed the project for consistency with the development standards of the specific plan and has found that the project is consistent in setbacks, building heights, lot coverage and other development standards. Staff has attached the design guidelines & development standards for the approved Two Bunch Palms Resort Specific Plan (Exhibit Nos. 18 & 19). The only concerns staff has is that the buildings have a minimum of 10 feet between structures and a minimum setback of 5 feet from the drive aisle/fire lane. Since it is not shown on the plans staff has added a condition of approval (COA No. 1) to ensure these requirements are met. Staff will confirm compliance with this requirement during the building plan check process.

Consistency with the City's General Plan

The project was previously reviewed for consistency with the City's General Plan during the review and approval of the specific plan, tentative tract map, general plan amendment, zone map amendment and the development agreement. The current proposal is for revisions to a previous approval for the private treatment rooms and the surrounding amenities. Staff has not identified any inconsistencies with the City's General Plan or the approved specific plan.

Review Authority

The Two Bunch Palms Specific Plan was originally reviewed and approved by the City Council in 2007. The current proposal's review process is regulated by the specific plan and calls for review and approval of a Design Review Application by the Planning Commission.

Proposed Changes/Additions

The proposed changes/additions to the property include 20 new stand-alone treatment rooms, new pergolas, new hot tubs, new landscaping, new water stream and pond, new fire pits, a new palm grove, along with some renovations to a few existing buildings and some of the landscape areas.

The proposed private treatment rooms are relatively small (225 - 360sq. ft.) while the communal salt cave will be about 900 square feet. Each new structure will utilize precast concrete with grey stucco exterior finishes, dark hardwood beams and glass windows as shown on the attached plans. The overall height of each structure will be approximately 11 feet above adjacent finished grade.

Landscaping & Other Features

The proposed landscaping consists of installation of a new palm grove, landscape buffering and a new pond on the east side of the project site. This area will also incorporate a small water stream (about 500 feet long running north to south) that will feed into the pond from the existing ponds to the north. The new landscaping will utilize drought-tolerant and desert-friendly trees, shrubs and groundcover and include a sizable palm grove (staff estimates about 1/10 of an acre).

The new pool will be located adjacent to the existing pool and will expand the decking to accommodate more hotel guests. There will also be a new pergola adjacent to the new pool to provide a shaded area for the guests. The new features and amenities can be found on the attached plans (Exhibit Nos. 4-6).

NOTICING REQUIREMENT

The project was noticed to neighboring property owners within a 300-foot radius of the project site on Thursday January 30th, 2020 and was advertised in the Desert Star on Friday January 31st, 2020 per local and state noticing requirements. No public comments have been received as of this writing.

DESIGN REVIEW FINDINGS

17.80.040 Director findings.

The Director (or Planning Commission) shall determine that the project adequately meets adopted City performance standards and design guidelines, based upon the following findings:

- A. The design of the proposed project would provide a desirable environment for its occupants and visiting public as well as its neighbors through good aesthetic use of materials, textures, and colors that will remain appealing and will retain a reasonably adequate level of maintenance.*

The proposed revisions to the site plan and the private treatment rooms will serve to provide the hotel guests with improved facilities that enhance the experience of the guest. They will also provide for more privacy for individual treatments and communal facilities for small groups. The proposed architecture and layout of the new treatment rooms and the additional amenities will complement the existing hotel facility and will use complimentary architecture, building materials, and colors. Staff recommends this finding.

- B. The design and layout of the proposed project will not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future development, and will not result in vehicular and/or pedestrian hazards; and*

The proposed revision to the new spa facility and private treatment rooms will provide the hotel guests with improved facilities that enhance the experience of its guests. They will also provide for more privacy by providing individual treatment rooms. The proposed changes are interior to the property and are not visible from any public rights-of-ways, nor are they visible from adjacent properties. Staff has concluded that the proposed project would not interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties and that it will not result in vehicular or pedestrian hazards. Staff recommends this finding.

- C. The architectural design of the proposed project is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and will maintain the harmonious, orderly and attractive development contemplated by this Zoning Ordinance and the General Plan. (Prior code § 159.38.040)*

The proposed revisions to the site plan and the private treatment rooms will serve to provide the hotel guests with improved facilities that enhance the experience of the guests. They will also provide for more privacy for individual treatments and communal facilities for small groups. The proposed architecture and layout of the new treatment rooms and the additional amenities will complement the existing hotel facility and will use complimentary architecture, building materials, and colors. Staff has concluded that the proposed project is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and will maintain the harmonious, orderly and attractive development. Staff recommends this finding.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The City Council certified the Final EIR for the Two Bunch Palms Specific Plan back in 2007. In accordance with the provisions of the Pursuant to Section 15162(a) of the CEQA regulations, once an EIR has been certified for a project, no subsequent environmental review needs to be completed unless there are substantial changes in the project that warrant additional review. The Planning Commission only needs to make a finding that the proposed development is consistent with the original EIR and that no further analysis is required. City staff has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the approved specific plan and the Certified EIR.

FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant has paid all required fees for the review and entitlement process and will be subject to all Building Permit fees.

EXHIBIT(S)

- 1) Draft Conditions of Approval
- 2) Project Description
- 3) Site Plan
- 4) Landscape Plan (North)
- 5) Landscape Plan (South)
- 6) Color Elevation for Single Dry Treatment Rooms
- 7) Color Elevation for Double Wet Treatment Rooms
- 8) Color Elevation for Double Dry Treatment Rooms
- 9) Color Elevation for Single Wet Treatment Rooms
- 10) Rendering of Pool Area
- 11) Rendering of Treatment Rooms and Surrounding Landscaping
- 12) Color Elevation for Mud Bath Building

- 13) Color Elevation for Communal Mud Bath Building
- 14) Color Elevation for Salt Cave Building
- 15) Color Elevation for Stream Room
- 16) Color Elevation for Back of House
- 17) Site Photo Looking Southwest
- 18) Design Guidelines of the Approved Specific Plan
- 19) Development Standards of the Approved Specific Plan
- 20) Previously Approved Project Phasing Plan
- 21) Two Bunch Palms Specific Plan EIR
- 22) Photo of Existing Pool and Deck
- 23) Photo of Existing Hot Tub