Hotel Design: Renovation

Hye Sue Chong

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Hotel Design: Renovation

by

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Table of Contents

List of Illustrations ................................................. ii

Chapter                                    Page

I. Introduction .................................................. 1
II. Description ................................................... 4
III. Concept ....................................................... 10
IV. The Access .................................................... 13
V. The Design ...................................................... 17
VI. Summary ....................................................... 21
VII. Conclusion ................................................... 23

Illustrations ....................................................... 24
Selected Bibliography ............................................. 60
# List of Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Existing First Floor Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Proposed First Floor Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-A. Proposed Passageways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-B. Proposed Access in Employees’ Area and Main Kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Existing Second Floor Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Proposed Second Floor Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Existing Building Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Perspective of proposed Room (Suite, 108)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-a. Design Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Top View of the Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Top View of the Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Top view of the Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Southwest View of the Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Entrance and Front Desk Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Main Circulation in Front Desk Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Lobby Lounge View from the West</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. Fountain Partitions in Lobby Lounge and Column Design in Main Circulation
16. First Elevator and Access to Front Desk Office and Main Stairway
17. Main Restrooms
18. Banquet Room
19. Restaurant/Bar
20. Restaurant /Bar
21. Restaurant/Bar
22. Tables and Chairs in the Restaurant/Bar
23. Main Hallway and Restaurant
24. Main Kitchen and Restaurant
25. Restaurant
26. Restaurant
27. Interior of Restaurant (Left) and Main Hallway
28. Main Kitchen Layout
29. Kitchen for the Banquet Room
30. Restrooms in Restaurant/Bar and Secondary Exit Door
31. Top View of Second Exit and Employees’ Corridor
32. Organization of Kims Hotel
33-(a,b,c,d). Main Symbol Design.
34-a. Chair and Table Design
34-b. Barstool
35-a. Chair and Table Match
1. Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to design an urban hotel located in Seoul, the capital city of Korea. I used an existing hotel, named Kims, for this renovation project. The existing hotel consists of forty-eight guest rooms, one bar, one coffee shop, one restaurant and a lobby area. The coffee shop and the restaurant are placed in the same room separated by three-foot high partitions. Compared to other transient or residential hotels in Seoul and large cities in the United States, this four-story hotel with forty-eight guest rooms can be designated as a small hotel in scale. William S. Gray and Salvatore C. Liguon define hotels with less than one hundred rooms as small hotels, with regard to their size in large cities.1 Because Seoul is one of the busiest cities in Asia, as well as in the world, the owner of this hotel can expect not only an increase in the number of national guests but also in guests from abroad. The expected customer groups are business people from other areas in Korea, business people from abroad, and national and international tourists. I believe that customers will be aware of and enjoy visiting this small hotel if the hotel provides adequate advertising and a convenient and beautiful environment with distinguished decorations. Therefore, renovation is required to help improve the general qualities of the hotel and to provide advantages that small hotels possess such as coziness. Guests can feel as if they

are staying home. Furthermore, the business operation is less complicated than it is in larger hotels.

I intend to provide high quality facilities with easy access and unique decorations for guests and employees, and to use traditional Korean elements of decoration for this project, because I judge that the most important factor that could impress foreigners is to express my own culture to them through the design of this hotel. In addition, this design concept could evoke an attachment to the culture for natives. In the design process, I first referred to characteristics of traditional Korean house forms and furniture. They supported the design of the objects and the details that are used in this project. Then, I unified and abstracted the characteristics so that these motives could be integrated into my own design. Because one scope of this renovation is to internationalize this hotel, and the fact that I designed this project as a result of studying in the United States, I consulted Americans with Disabilities Act: law and regulations and Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations NYCRR: New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations for guidance.

I approached this interior renovation project by dividing it into two main parts; space planning and design. For the space planning and circulation, I took a hotel’s functional organizations and principles of operation into consideration, and as I mentioned earlier, I used traditional Korean design characteristics for aesthetic motives. I intended, therefore, to make this hotel artistically well-organized by means of combining its unique visual aspects with practicality in performing the basic role of hotels, such as management and operation. Thus, the
hotel can be a more valuable asset than it was before the renovation, both for the owner as well as for expected customers.
II. Description

The existing Kims Hotel is a four-story building located in Seoul, the capital city of Korea. The main subject of this chapter is to depict the general changes and the design choices in this renovation project to facilitate an understanding of the entire design process that will be discussed in the following chapters. The choices for redesign for this project apply to the whole building. Most parts of the building interior are altered in access as well as in the change of design detail except the stairways. The stairways are to remain in their original form and only have a change in the color schemes and materials. However, changes in the location of egress and of the interior walls of the second stairway on the east side of the first floor have been made. The whole design process is described in a specific order. First floor changes will be explained first, and then the second floor will be described. Finally, the choices of design detail will be discussed.

The first floor of the existing building can be separated into three main parts, front desk area (front desk and lobby lounge), foods and beverage service area (restaurant, coffee shop, banquet room, bar, restrooms, and kitchen), and employees' area (men and women employees' locker rooms, employees' cafeteria and kitchen, and an employees' restroom) (Fig. 1). For the proposed first floor plan, these main three sections are to remain, however, several functional spaces have been added to the existing building, and some spaces are altered. The
renovation begins with changes to the front desk area in the first floor because guests first see the front desk area from the main entrance. Furthermore, since all guests move through this space first to reach other areas, it functions also as a medium that informs the customers of the main theme of this hotel’s design. To avoid heavy traffic which may be caused by locating the proposed new spaces including the front desk office, the front desk, gift shop, display area, and lobby lounge in the same area, there is an inevitable need to expand the building structure here. Furthermore, the existing lobby lounge that is now empty space has been renovated and enlarged to serve as a seating area and a place for drinks and snacks for a maximum of sixty people. Noticeable changes have been made in the front desk area; the interior spaces have been renovated and structural changes to the entrance of the existing building have been made as well (Fig. 2). The existing main entrance has been entirely removed and restructured by installing four more main perimeter columns to the building which enlarge this area so that the proposed new spaces which are the front desk office and front desk, gift shop, display area, and lobby lounge can fit comfortably.

Before the renovation, the manager used one of the guest rooms for an office. Therefore, a front desk office is added to the new design and placed adjacent to the front desk to facilitate an organized and easy operation for which the front desk is responsible (Fig. 2). In addition, the proposed management office and finance office will help the owner to operate the hotel in an efficient manner by allowing him to separate management tasks to three different offices.
As guests move eastward past the front desk area, they see the foods and beverage service area next. In the existing building, a restaurant, a coffee shop, a banquet room, kitchens, a bar, and restrooms are included in this area (Fig. 1). The existing restaurant and coffee shop are located in the same room, and three-foot high partitions for distinguishing these two places are used. The coffee shop has been removed in the new design, and the management office has been placed at that location instead. The lobby lounge will replace the coffee shop and has been changed to include seats and serve beverages and snacks. The proposed management office is provided to manage the tasks of the foods and beverage service department. There will be more explanation about the office planning regarding hotel organizational design in Chapter III. Another guest elevator has been installed in front of the proposed management office to increase carrying capacity (Fig. 2). The existing bar has been changed to serve as a dinner restaurant and bar together, and restrooms have been placed only for the guests who are using this space in the new plan. The banquet room and the public restrooms remain to serve the same role, while the access and all of the design elements in these places have been changed in the proposed plan (Fig. 2). More details about the changes will be discussed in Chapters V and VI.

The employees' area can be reached at the far northeast corner of the existing building, and includes locker rooms for men and women, a cafeteria and kitchen, and a restroom for employees' use. In the proposed new design, a storage room, an employees' lounge, and the finance office, in addition to the existing men and women employees' locker rooms are located here. However,
the employees' cafeteria and kitchen have been removed, and the proposed employees' lounge will function as a substitution for the cafeteria (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

In this project, I chose the second floor for the remodeling of guest rooms as a prototype. The existing third and fourth floors are exactly the same as the second floor. However, only the second floor has an exit door to the ground level because of the slope of the building site in the existing plan (Fig. 3). Thus, the proposed second floor plan represents the same access and structure as the expected third and fourth floor plans except that there is an exit door and service elevator opening to the loading dock only in the proposed second floor plan (Fig. 4). The building section shows the ground level change which enables the second floor to have egress directly to the outside of the building (Fig. 5). As a result of the sloped building site, the proposed service elevator has doors which open to the loading dock as well as to the laundry and storage room on each of the second floor in the new design (Fig. 4). The existing building consists of a total of forty-eight guest rooms with sixteen rooms on each of the second, third, and fourth floors.

A service elevator has been installed to facilitate the room service between the main kitchen on the first floor and the upper floors in the new design. It enables fast room service, providing a short passageway for employees' use (Fig. 2 and Fig. 4). In addition, this elevator opens in both directions, to the loading dock and the laundry/storage room on the second floor (Fig. 4). In the new design, two guest rooms have been removed to allow for another guests' elevator,
a suite room, and a laundry/storage room on the second floor. This improves the hotel's general convenience and quality. The proposed laundry/storage room on each floor speeds housekeeping service and eliminates the need to move laundry between floors. Furthermore, it prevents noise from the service elevator because this room is isolated between the service elevator and the room numbered 101 (Fig. 4). One suite room, numbered 108, has been provided at the far west of the second floor in the new design, and it is located close to the service vending machines (Fig. 4 and Fig. 6).

The custom designed pieces for the detail design in the new design, such as the main symbol of the hotel, furniture, partitions, and fountains, inform the design theme and are as important as the other changes in this project. Indeed, each design possesses its own motif and captures the designer's artistic approach to this project. Among the detail design choices, the main symbol of this hotel can be listed first. The symbol has been shaped into cubic forms and mounted on the façade of the wall behind the front desk counter and on the curved wall in the lobby lounge in the new design (Fig. 13). Furthermore, the design of this main symbol has been reinterpreted and extensively applied to the other detail designs such as tabletops, back of the chairs, main hallway floor, etc. The second detail design includes the furniture: the front desk table, all the chairs and tables for customers' use, bar table, information and cashiers' desks, and pedestals in the main hall way and in the display area. The shapes of this furniture represent the unique design theme of this hotel as do the choices of materials and colors. The third choice of the detail design includes both partitions and window treatments,
which are made of wood and paper, found in the proposed restaurant (Fig. 27). Lastly, the design of the fountains show unique detail. All the fountains are designed to function as partitions, and some of them stand as column decoration as well.

Not all the new design changes have been described specifically in this chapter, but noticeable changes have been mentioned so far. More details will be explained under the proper title in the following chapters.
III. Concept

Before redesigning Kims hotel, the designer was required to first analyze recommended management systems and departmentalization of hotels to incorporate hotel management efficiency within the proposed plan. Eddystone C. Nebel III presents a 500-room hotel to explain a typical organization model that divides the hotel staff under the general manager’s office along functional lines into five separate administrative departments: rooms, food and beverage, sales and marketing, personnel, and accounting. Kims hotel included the food and beverage, the rooms, and the accounting departments in the organization, and there were three department heads and one general manager before the renovation (Fig. 32). The owner wanted these divisions and the operation system to remain in the new design; however, there were no specified facilities for the general manager and the other directors to operate their own tasks effectively. In compliance with the hotel owner's request, three different offices have been added in the new design at the proper locations.

First, the primary tasks of the food and beverage department in this existing hotel are to provide food and drink to guests, as Eddystone C. Nebel III

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defines its function. The director of the food and beverage department in this existing hotel was assigned to manage the restaurant, coffee shop, bar, banquet room, and room service including food preparation, and to report directly to the general manager. In the new plan, the proposed restaurant, banquet room, bar/restaurant, and lobby lounge have been included in the food and beverage department, and these places have become a unit for which the director of this department is responsible. The Management Office for the director has been provided behind the second elevator (Fig. 2). The office has been placed in the central part of this hotel for high visibility so that customers who need catering services can locate the office easily (Fig. 2 and Fig. 9).

Second, the room department of this hotel can be divided into three subdivisions such as the front office, reservations, and housekeeping, and it is headed by one director. The director of this department also reports to the general manager (Fig. 32). The size of the room department is smaller than that found in larger sized hotels; Eddystone C. Nebel III divides a room department in a 500-room hotel into six subunits: front office, laundry, reservations, housekeeping, security, and engineering. Because the size of this 48-room hotel is not so big as to have independent laundry, security, and engineering sub-departments, the housekeeping takes charge of laundry, and the front office executes security and engineering jobs in this hotel. The provided laundry and storage rooms on the

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second, third, and fourth floors, improve efficiency for housekeeping services. The room department of this hotel is directly managed by the front office; therefore, the Front Desk Office for the director of this department has been located directly adjacent to the front desk (Fig. 2 and Fig. 9). This office allows access only to authorized employees by requiring them to pass through the front desk work station to reach the office (Fig. 2).

Lastly, the office for the accounting department has been located at the end corner of the employees’ area in the new design, and is called the Finance Office in the new plan (Fig. 2 and Fig. 9). The accounting director and the general manager share use of this office because they work primarily with each other. The location, at the back of the first floor on a dead-end corridor, secures the office as much as possible for only related employees, while discouraging unrelated persons who would have no purpose to be in that corridor.

The general information regarding the hotel’s operations has been described in this chapter to facilitate understanding of the space planning for the new design. In the next chapter, the access of the new plan will be explained specifically.
IV. The Access

The objective of this chapter is to describe the proposed hotel’s access as well as the convenience and efficiency provided for both guests and staff. The illustrations of the model portray the renovation solution (Fig. 7 Through Fig. 31).

Arriving through the main entrance in the new design, guests first see the front desk area, as described earlier in this thesis. A close-up view of the model simulates the actual interior of this area (Fig. 12). In this area stands a central column which is decorated with the fountain. This circulation space surrounding the column provides access to the gift shop to the left, the front desk, and the lobby lounge to the right (Fig. 2 and Fig. 12). The passageways surrounding this column function as the main circulation that connects customers to other areas (Fig. 13). Three-foot high fountains have been placed between the lobby lounge and the main circulation (Fig. 15). Therefore, the gap between the fountains shall be the entrance to the lobby lounge, and the width of which, 4’-11 ½”, complies with the New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations that requires 44 inches for the minimum width of Passageways and exits for hotels.5

Guests may feel that lobby lounge is wider because their view extends above the 3-foot high fountain partitions, as well as through the fixed glass walls, on the exterior (Fig. 14). Furthermore, people in the main circulation space can enjoy the design details presented in the lobby lounge over those partitions. The curved fixed glass walls in the lobby lounge (Fig. 14) provide an outdoor view, and the curved shapes are integrated well with the other curve shaped designs such as the fountain partitions, the front desk countertop, etc. (Fig. 15).

The existing first floor plan (Fig. 1) and building section (Fig. 5) show that there were stairs going down eastward past the front desk area before the renovation. The floor level change did not fulfill any purpose in this hotel but hindered the accessibility for disabled people. Therefore, my proposal is to reconstruct part of the first floor to eliminate the level change.

Moving eastward past the front desk area in the proposed hotel, guests meet another fountain which creates a transition point between the lobby and the guest room elevators and the food and beverage areas (Fig. 2 and Fig. 23). This fountain serves as a decoration as well as a partition defining two corridors. One allows access to dining and service, and the other leads to the Management Office, guest elevators, public phone booth, and restrooms (Fig. 2-A and Fig. 23).

The main Hallway provides a generous and inviting space for guests to meet before and after banquets and meals (Fig. 2, Fig. 2-B, and Fig. 23). A secondary corridor provides emergency egress to a stair and also separates service and employee areas for acoustic and visual privacy and security (Fig. 2-B). The storage room location accommodates spare equipment and supplies for facilitating
better service to guests. In the new plan, two rest rooms have been proposed for employees’ use at different locations. One has been located next to their locker rooms. The other one is proposed in between the guests’ restrooms, which are for the customers in the Bar/Restaurant; however, its door faces the secondary corridor behind the Bar/Restaurant (Fig. 2-B). A short distance from their work areas, this restroom has been provided for employees who are entering from the main hallway and the main kitchen. The specified access plan shows more details about the locations of the spaces listed above (Fig. 2-B).

As described earlier, the laundry/storage room has replaced the former Room 101 (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4). The second floor plan indicates alterations and upgrading of bathrooms, closets and guest rooms and shows proposed furniture and fixture layouts. Most doors have been relocated and a suite has been created. Room 108, at the west corner (Fig. 6). The suite is further described in perspective (Fig. 6). The perspective also shows the prototype of the furniture design and layout and represents the design theme for all the guest rooms (Fig. 6). Room 108 in the existing building (Fig. 3) has been replaced with the second elevator in the new design (Fig. 4). Storage spaces at the right and left side of the second elevator store housekeeping supplies and isolate elevator noise from the proposed rooms, numbered 106 and 107 (Fig. 4). The service vending machines, which provide soft drinks, snacks, etc., have been placed next to the first elevator for the convenience of guests (Fig. 4).
The above primarily explains accessibility and circulation. The general design theme and the detail designs will be depicted precisely, with illustrations, in the following chapters.
V. The Design

Characteristics of traditional Korean house and furniture forms have inspired the motifs for the detail designs in this project. In this chapter, the accompanying illustrations will help the reader to fully understand the written descriptions.

As indicated in chapter II, I chose to custom design the main symbol of the hotel, furniture, partitions, and fountains. The design of the symbol refers to *Chil-Bo*, which is one of the traditional Korean designs for furniture ornamentation (Fig. 33-a). Jeong Shil Hong explains that *Chil-bo* is a symbol that originated in Buddhism, meaning good luck.\(^6\) I first simplified the shape of *Chil-bo* into a geometric form (Fig. 33-b) which became the predecessor of the applied symbols in the proposed front desk and lobby lounge (Fig. 13), representing the name of this hotel. The original design has been extruded into cubic forms to stand out and be mounted on the façade of the wall behind the front desk counter and in the lobby lounge (Fig. 13 and Fig. 33-b). The letters of the hotel name have not appeared anywhere in the proposed interior so that only the main symbol reminds guests of this hotel’s image. Thus, being regarded as one of the most important philosophies in redesigning this hotel, the visual communication replaces any written or verbal advertisement of the proposed

\(^6\) Jeong Shil Hong, Jang Sok and Jamulshoi (*Metal Ornament and Lock*) (Seoul, Korea: Daewonsa Publishing Co., Ltd., 1990), 92.
hotel. A yellow color has been applied to the symbol at the front desk because it possesses high visibility in contrast with the reddish brown wood paneled wall, for which I selected a cherry finish (Fig. 13). The other symbol in the lobby lounge has been mounted in white on a white wall in order not to interfere with the color scheme for the lobby lounge, which is primarily black and white (Fig. 13 and Fig. 14).

Chairs, tables, and pedestals have been custom designed for the new hotel. Three different types of chairs with individual matching tables and one kind of barstool have been designed in detail. Figure 34-a presents the prototypical designs of chair-1 and table-1, which can be found in the lobby lounge and Restaurant/Bar. The barstool in Fig. 34-b is identical to chair-1, except for the height of the seat. Thus, the bar area can be integrated with the dining area in the Restaurant/Bar.

Figures 35-a and 35-b manifest the proposed marriage of the table and chair designs. The tables’ edges have been designed into curved shapes. Thus, the curved shapes of the tables contrast with the simplicity of the repeated linear shaped chairs and function as a visual accent (Fig. 35-a and Fig. 35-b). The back of chair-2, as well as the inlaid design on the tabletops, have been derived from the main symbol design. The same chair design is used in guest rooms as shown in the suite (Fig. 6). In addition, the head of the bed in that perspective (Fig. 6), table-4, and pedestal-1 also have a similarity to the main symbol design (Fig. 36 and Fig. 37).
The front desk counter design reflects the same theme with the fountain partitions, which separate the lobby lounge from the main circulation. The design motifs for both the front desk counter and fountain partitions in the lobby lounge entrance have been inspired by a traditional Korean design, called T’aeguk, which originates from Chinese philosophy (Fig. 38). Jeong Shil Hong describes that T’aeguk symbolizes the principles of “yin and yang” which represents the cosmic dual principles, positive and negative cosmic forces.  

Various shapes of plants have been one of the most important motivations for me to create the furniture shapes such as the fountain (Fig. 43) and pedestal-2 (Fig. 44) design which have been motivated by a leaf shape. Specifically, the fountain design for the main column (Fig. 40) and the other fountain design in figure 42 have been proposed in petal shapes. Figure 41 illustrates the perspective of the main column in petal shapes and lobby entrance.

The partitions and window treatment in the restaurant have been made of maple wood and paper (Fig. 25, 26, and 27). Those materials represent the typical forms of traditional Korean doors and windows which are produced by pasting paper on wooden frames (Fig. 6-a). The design reference in figure 6-a also motivated the designs of chair-1, chair-3, and the window treatment in figure 6.

The designs listed above can be classified into two distinctive design elements, straight and curved shapes.

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7. Hong 91.
The curved shapes bring out natural images while the straight shapes represent a refined sharp image for this hotel. Thus, the designer intends to bring “balanced beauty” to the designs for this project.
VI. Summary

My designs have not been applied to the actual building yet. However, the renovation proposal for the first floor of the building is portrayed through a highly detailed model (Fig. 7 through Fig. 31). The model has been built to scale so that it can illustrate the expected atmosphere as accurately as possible. In addition, it also displays the proposed color schemes and finishes except for the kitchen areas. For both kitchens in the hotel, the model only displays the proposed layouts because the fixtures in the kitchens will be standard (Fig. 28 and Fig. 29).

Most color schemes applied in this design can be identified by the illustrations (Fig. 7 through Fig. 31); however, the choices for the finishes, which have not appeared in the model, will be described below.

**Chair-1, 2, and barstool**
Seat – maple (creamy white)
Back and legs – black paint on wood

**Chair-3**
Seat – walnut (chocolate brown)
Back and legs – black paint on wood

**Table-1 and 4**
Top – maple (creamy white)
Legs – black paint on wood

**Table-2**
Top – walnut (chocolate brown)
Inlaid piece – maple (creamy white)
Legs – black paint on wood
Table-3
Top – maple (creamy white)
Inlaid piece – walnut (chocolate brown)
Legs – black paint on wood

Pedestal-1 and 2
Black marble

Front desk counter
Top – cherry
Body-black marble

All fountains
Black marble

Carpets have been chosen as the floor covering in most rooms. The color choices for the carpets appear in the illustrations of the model: black for the Lobby Lounge (Fig. 14), deep red for the Banquet Room (Fig. 18), deep blue for the Restaurant/Bar (Fig. 19 through Fig. 22), and yellow ocher and beige for the Restaurant (Fig. 25 and Fig. 26). For the wall finishes, cherry wood has been chosen for the Banquet Room and Restaurant/Bar, and creamy beige marble for the Restaurant. In addition, creamy beige marble has been used for the floor covering from the front desk area through the main hallway.
VII. Conclusion

For this hotel renovation, I first analyzed the existing structure as well as general hotel operations and then proposed modifications to the floor plans to provide inviting and convenient access for guests, and maximum efficiency for employees. After space planning, with convenience and comfort in mind, I then designed the unique detail pieces in the building. Thus, the new design combines both practicality in the use of the hotel and creativity in the decorations. My endeavor to create unique interior space appears in every detail.

These are important factors to me as I seek to produce a good design. While developing this design process step by step, I came to confirm my personal definition of "good design". That has been the primary benefit of this thesis exploration.

Good design should reflect the designer's creative sense and an understanding of the function for which a space is to be utilized. What makes a design most valuable is a designer's consideration for potential users and viewers.
Figure 2-A. Proposed Passageways

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"
Figure 2-B. Proposed Access in Employees’ Area and Kitchen

Scale: 1/16” = 1'-0"
Figure 3. Existing Second Floor Plan

Scale: 3/50" = 1'-0"
Figure 5. Existing Building Section
Scale: 1/25" = 1'-0"
Figure 6. Perspective of Proposed Room (Suite, 108)

Figure 6-a. Design Reference
Figure 7. Top View of the Model

Figure 8. Top View of the Model
Figure 9. Top View of the Model
Figure 10. Southwest View of the Model
Figure 11. Entrance

Figure 12. Entrance and Front Desk Area
Figure. 13. Main Circulation in Front Desk Area
Figure 14. Lobby Lounge View from the West

Figure 15. Fountain Partitions in Lobby Lounge and Column Design in Main Circulation
Figure 16. First Elevator and Access to Front Desk Office and Main Stairway

Figure 17. Main Restrooms
Figure. 18. Banquet Room
Figure. 19. Restaurant/Bar

Figure. 20. Restaurant/Bar
Figure 21. Restaurant/Bar

Figure 22. Tables and Chairs in the Restaurant/Bar
Figure 23. Main Hallway and Restaurant
Figure. 24. Main Kitchen and Restaurant
Figure. 25. Restaurant

Figure. 26. Restaurant
Figure. 27. Interior of Restaurant (Left) and Main Hallway
Figure. 28. Main Kitchen Layout

Figure. 29. Kitchen for Banquet Room
Figure 30. Restrooms in Restaurant/Bar and Secondary Exit Door
Figure 31. Top View of Secondary Exit and Employees' Corridor
Figure 32. Organization of Kims Hotel
Figure 33-(a,b,c,d). Main Symbol Design
Scale: 1/2"=1'-0"
Figure 35-a. Chair and Table Match
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"

Figure 35-b. Chair and Table Match
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"
Design Reference, "T'aeguk"

Top View
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

(a) Perspective

(b) Perspective

Front Elevation
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Figure 38. Front Desk Counter
Figure 39 Fountain Partitions
in Lobby Lounge (Scale: 1/4"=1'-0")
Figure 40. Column Design
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"
Figure 41. Perspective of Lobby Lounge Entrance and Main Column
Figure 42. Fountain Design
Scale: 1/4"=1'-0"
Figure 43. Fountain Design in Lobby Lounge

Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Figure 44. Pedestal-2.

Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"
Bibliography


