

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**  
for  
**February 19, 2009**  
**MEETING NO. 01-09**  
*Consent Agenda*

<b>APPLICATION:</b>	HDC2009-00449
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	500 W. Montgomery Ave. Bullard Circle, Thomas St.
<b>ACCEPTED:</b>	January 27, 2009
<b>45 DAY LIMIT:</b>	March 13, 2009
<b>OWNER:</b>	Chestnut Lodge Properties, Inc. (Rob Baker, Agent)
<b>REQUEST:</b>	Site signage, sign lighting
<b>STAFF:</b>	Robin D. Ziek

*Chestnut Lodge*  
Drawing Key

NP	Name Plaque
HP	Historic Area Plaque
AP	Address Plaque

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The applicant is requesting approval to install cast-stone name signage with associated lighting at the entrance walls; eight bronze historic plaques on cast-stone/concrete piers; and, three cast-stone address panels on piers faced with Stoneyhurst stone at specified locations within the eight-acre historic site.

**Staff recommends approval, given the following findings:**

**DRAFT MOTION OF APPROVAL:**

Finding HDC2009-0049 for site signage and associated sign lighting in compliance with the City of Rockville's *Technical Guide #9* and the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation #9 and #10*. And finding that, I move approval of the application.

**BACKGROUND:** The HDC approved the Chestnut Lodge entrance wall feature on July 20, 2006 with the condition that the applicant return for approval of site signage and any lighting proposal for the entrance wall. The HDC has review authority over exterior alterations and new construction that occurs on the property within the West Montgomery Avenue and Rose Hill Farm Historic Districts, and provides courtesy reviews on changes that are proposed on properties that are adjacent, abutting or confronting the historic districts.

**Previous Requests for Chestnut Lodge:**

PRU2005-00022	Exploratory application for residential development, approved by Mayor and Council 2/6/06 [Resolution 3-06]
HDC2005-00336	Demolish Upper Cottage; re-construct Ice House, approved 7/21/05
Courtesy Reviews	Exploratory plan; exterior Lodge alterations and additions, 7/21/05
HDC2006-00360	Design and materials for new residential construction in Rose Hill Farm Historic District, approved 6/15/06
Courtesy Reviews	Detailed site plan; preliminary phasing schedule; entrance wall feature; relocation of ice house; rehabilitation of Rose Hill Barn; rebuilding of Stable; rehabilitation and additions to Little Lodge and Main Lodge, 6/15/06
HDC2006-00363	Wall entry feature at W. Montgomery Ave./Laird St. main entrance, approved with conditions, 7/20/06
HDC2006-00366	Removal of Wing A on Lodge, approved on consent agenda, 9/21/06
HDC2006-00369	Rehabilitation of and addition to Little Lodge, approved 10/19/06
HDC2006-00369A	Amendment to enlarge second story door opening on Little Lodge, approved 6/21/07
HDC2006-00370	Rebuild Stable as accessory structure on Little Lodge lot, approved 10/19/06
HDC2006-00371	Rehabilitation of Ice House as accessory structure, approved 10/19/06
HDC2007-00411	Landscaping and site work at Little Lodge, approved with conditions, 1/17/2008

**Property Area:** 20.43 acres. The front eight acres, including the main entrance off West Montgomery Avenue (facing Laird Street), are in the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District.

**City of Rockville Permits Required:**

HDC Certificate of Approval  
Sign permits

**Historic Significance:** The Chestnut Lodge property has two periods of historic and architectural significance. It is the only surviving example of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century hotel complex with original building hierarchy from Rockville's summer resort hotel era. It is also significant for its 20<sup>th</sup> century role as a nationally renowned facility for the treatment and research of psychiatric disorders. There is a high level of integrity of the site, buildings and grounds, which allows the site to convey its history as both hotel and hospital.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT:**

The applicant has combined all the site signage into this one application. The Chestnut Lodge property has been redeveloped as a multi-property neighborhood with individual addresses for each structure. This application will address the need to identify the general neighborhood, and then to distinguish between the condominiums within the original hotel building, and the single-family homes throughout the property.

The applicant has provided a narrative with descriptions of the proposed signage [Circle 8-20], and maps to identify the locations of each of the proposed signs [Circle 21– 26]. On the maps, “**NP**” signifies a Name Plaque; “**HP**” signifies a Historic Area Plaque; and “**AP**” signifies an Address Plaque.

### **Name Plaques (NP)**

1. West Montgomery Avenue Entrance: [Circle 12-13,15,19,20,21-23] Cast concrete wall panels on entrance wall – “Chestnut Lodge” on right wall, 6.5 feet in length by 18 inches in height, plus two “CL” logo panels on the two piers associated with the left wall, flanking pedestrian pathway into the property. The cast concrete has the appearance of limestone and will be similar to that already used on entry piers at Rose Hill and King Farm developments.

The applicant proposes using “Commercial Script” for the name and initials:

*Chestnut Lodge*  
*CL*

Lighting (4 uplights) at West Montgomery Avenue entrance: Two ground level Delta Star uplights (deep cut-off, low brightness, and low voltage), will be installed among the landscape plant material to illuminate the Chestnut Lodge wall sign to the right of the entry drive. Two additional uplights will be installed to highlight the CL logos on the piers flanking the sidewalk entrance into the property, with one light for each pier [Circle 19].

Staff agrees that low-key lighting will help to identify the vehicular and pedestrian entrances at night. Illumination should be kept to a minimum level to achieve these purposes. The City of Rockville's *Technical Guides #9* notes that indirect lighting (from a concealed light fixture) may be allowed in a historic district, while self-illuminated signs are not allowed.

### Address Plaques (AP)

1. The Lodge Building: [Circle 16-17, 20,23] A cast-stone/concrete panel approximately 5 feet wide, with “*Chestnut Lodge* 500 West Montgomery Avenue” will be installed at the triangular landscape island in front of the Lodge, facing Bullard Circle, and mounted on a pier faced with Stoneyhurst stone.

2. The Little Lodge: [Circle 17-19,24-25] The address “3 Bullard Circle” will be used three times. There will be a single entrance pier for this property at the Bullard Drive intersection next to the landscaped island described above in #2. This part of Bullard Circle leads to the driveway for both the Little Lodge and for the Lodge Building garage parking. The actual property entrance to the Little Lodge will be identified with two additional piers, to clearly mark the private property entrance. On each pier, the address will be shown in raised cast-stone lettering on the vertical face of the pier. The piers will be faced with Stoneyhurst stone.

### Historic Plaques (HP)

1. Historic Area Interpretive Plaques: [Circle 8-11] Eight individual bronze interpretive plaques will be mounted on concrete bases that have a finish similar in appearance to the cast-stone used for the Name Plaques. The historic plaques will be installed by the applicant at specific locations throughout the site [Circle 20-26]. They will be solid bronze, with raised bronze lettering (similar to those produced by the Erie Landmark Company). The actual size may vary with the amount of text. The text font will be selected for legibility, such as Iowan Old Style or New Brunswick. The bronze material was chosen to reflect the historic nature of the site, as well as to be weather- and vandal-resistant.

HP-1	[Circle 8, 23 ]	Chestnut Lodge Historic Site
HP-2	[Circle 8, 23 ]	The Woodlawn Hotel
HP-3	[Circle 9, 24 ]	Little Lodge, Upper Cottage, Stable and Ice House
HP-4	[Circle 9, 26 ]	Rose Hill Barn, Creamery & Grape Arbor
HP-5	[Circle 10, 24]	Frieda’s Cottage
HP-6	[Circle 11, 23, 24]	Historic Landscape – Tree Preservation (3)

Staff recommends the text, selection of typeface for legibility, style, plaque material, use of a concrete base reflective of the cast-stone plaques, and locations of the eight interpretive plaques. This is a standard material and format for historic markers, and will be readily understood as such by the public. In addition, this high quality material is durable. The proposed concrete piers will reflect other materials on the site, and therefore help unify the project.

### MATERIALS:

The applicant is proposing signs with differing character to highlight the different functions of the signs. The address panels will be cast-stone, with a limestone appearance. The cast-stone will complement the stone entry walls and other similar features, presenting a similar quality of material. The Interpretive Plaques will be cast bronze with raised bronze letters. Bronze is a high quality material that is often used for historic plaques, and these will stand out as a group for the public.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

Tax credits do not apply.

**COMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES:**

This proposed application for site signage and associated lighting meets the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation #9*, which states that "New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property..." and with *Standard #10*, which states that "New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired." Further, the application complies with the City of Rockville's *Technical Guide #9*, for signage, which has guidance on the use of discrete lighting that is not integral with the sign itself.

Attachments: Certificate of Approval application, "Plaques and Monuments for the Historic Chestnut Lodge Site", landscape/lighting plans showing locations of proposed signage (supplements to application.); Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*; City of Rockville's *Technical Guides #9*.