



City of Rockville

MEMORANDUM

October 6, 2006

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Rebecca Torma, Planner II

VIA: R. James Wasilak, AICP, Chief of Planning

SUBJECT: Briefing on Detailed Application PRU2006-0022A and the Construction Phasing Plan as required in the approved Resolution (Resolution No. 3-06, Attachment #5) for Exploratory Application PRU2005-00022, Chestnut Lodge.

BACKGROUND

Approved Planned Residential Unit development resolution

In February 2006, the Mayor and Council approved the construction of 36 new homes and detached garages, the rehabilitation of the Main Lodge, including alterations, the Little Lodge and Rose Hill Barn and the reconstruction the Icehouse and Stable. The applicant will also convey Frieda's Cottage to Peerless Rockville for use as a single-family dwelling. In addition, the two large tracts of land in the front portion of the site will be maintained by the homeowners association (HOA) for the community. The new homes will be in the rear of the property and have detached garages that will not be allowed to be converted to any other use. The Main Lodge will be converted to seven condominiums, with three units in the new addition and the other four units in the historic portion. The renovated Little Lodge will be a single family detached home while the reconstructed Stable and Icehouse will be accessory structures to it. The Rose Hill Barn will be converted to an accessory structure for one of the new single-family detached homes.

The approved PRU includes an internal road that will have one access point using the existing property entrance at the intersection of West Montgomery Avenue and Laird Street. An emergency access will be provided from the internal road to Autumn Wind Way. The fire and rescue squad will only use this access point in order to enter or exit the site in case of an emergency. A future connection could be built in this location, however, the approval of the Rose Hill and Chestnut Lodge Homeowners Associations (HOAs) and the City of Rockville would be required.

The two large tracks of land in the front historic area of the site will be carved out from the remaining area that has been removed for the Main Lodge, Little Lodge and Frieda's Cottage. These two parcels, Parcel A and Parcel B have an approximate total area of 4.7 acres (208,000 square feet). The homeowners association will maintain this area along with Parcels A, B, I, H, and Lot 1. All of these parcels will require a maintenance plan that includes tree maintenance plan, lawn maintenance program and a budget. The first maintenance plan must be approved at this Detailed Application stage. After the first approval, the homeowners association must submit a maintenance plan every three years unless the City terminates the program. Also, when the homeowners association submits the maintenance plan, the City reviews it for completeness and may require changes to the plan.

The applicant is required to install the buffers that were proposed in the *Comprehensive Master Plan*, which was adopted in 2002 by the Mayor and Council. A 10-foot buffer will be installed along the rear portion of the property abutting the homes on Tall Grass Court, Henson Oaks Lane, and Autumn Wind Way. A 20-foot buffer will be replanted along the right-of-way of Autumn Wind Way. The Chestnut Lodge homeowners association will maintain all of the buffers.

The applicant is required to construct off-site improvements including sidewalk, curb, gutter, and driveway aprons along the west side of Laird Street from West Montgomery Avenue to Anderson Avenue; along the east side of Lockett Street from Anderson Avenue to Beall Avenue; and along Harrison Street between Forest Avenue and North Van Buren Street. In addition, they are required to install sidewalk, curb and gutter along the east side of Thomas Street. These improvements will be phased, and a schedule is being developed for this Detailed Application.

Previous Detailed Application Approval

Detailed Application PRU2006-0022B was approved on August 9, 2006. This application consisted of the Demolition portion of the Construction Phasing Plan, which was required to be approved by the Planning Commission. The Demolition portion of the Construction Phasing Plan allowed the applicant to start related demolition work on the site while continuing to work on the site plan and related issues. This Detailed Application, however, did not allow for the removal of the historic buildings until the Site Plan Detailed Application was approved (PRU2006-0022A).

Historic District Commission (HDC) Courtesy Review

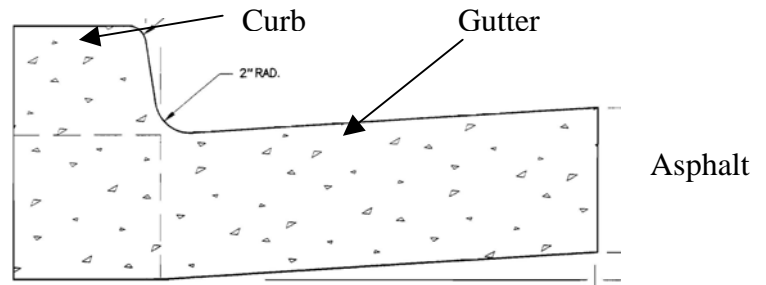
The applicant has been before the HDC on multiple occasions since filing the Exploratory Application. In July 2005, the HDC approved the demolition of the Upper Cottage with conditions including that the demolition not occur until approval of the Detailed Application. In addition, the applicant had a courtesy review of the Exploratory Application and the proposed additions and alterations to the Main Lodge. More recently, the applicant was approved for the construction of new single-family homes on lots in the Rose Hill Historic District, and had

courtesy reviews of the proposed work on the remaining historic buildings. In July 2006, the HDC also approved the entrance feature, which will be located at the main entrance opposite Laird Street. In September 2006, the HDC approved the removal of “Wing A” (not an historic part of the building) on the Main Lodge. The applicant will go back to the HDC in October 2006, for Certificates of Approval for the Little Lodge, Stable and Icehouse. At this time, the applicant is proposing to retain the Icehouse for use as an additional accessory structure to the Little Lodge.

Issues

- Use of Thomas Street –During demolition, the applicant is only permitted to use Thomas Street for construction workers’ personal vehicles for accessing parking and customers to the sales trailer. No heavy truck traffic is permitted during demolition. The applicant proposes to use Thomas Street for heavy truck traffic during construction of the internal road’s front section in the historic area, which is what staff is recommending. In addition, the time frame when the applicant will use Thomas Street will be in the Construction Phasing Plan.

- Granite curb with brick paver for the gutter pan – The applicant proposes to use a granite curb with a brick paver gutter pan in the historic area of the internal road. The granite and brick would be installed in place of the concrete curb and gutter (shown at right). The only place that granite curb has been used in the City is in the Town Center area. Staff is recommending that the applicant submit a lifecycle cost for the granite curb. This lifecycle cost would represent the cost to maintain and replace the granite over its life versus using a concrete curb. If the cost is similar, staff may recommend approval of the granite curb. Staff has not determined a position on the brick paver gutter. For the current Town Center project where granite is used, the gutter is concrete. In previous years, brick pavers were used for the gutter; however, staff has found that the brick pavers break during repaving of the street and therefore, the City switched to concrete.



- Location of Public Utility Easement (PUE) and reduced right-of-way in historic area – The applicant proposes a 10-foot PUE in the center of the eastern side (Parcel B) of the historic area (Attachment #3) and a reduced right-of-way for the portion of road also in the historic area. The PUE in the historic section will convey “dry” utilities (electric, cable, telephone) and run from West Montgomery Avenue and make a sharp right turn toward the Main Lodge. These utilities will only be for the Main Lodge. The other utilities, such as gas and water will come from the existing lines that are off of Thomas Street. Forestry staff is still evaluating the location of this easement.

Also, in the historic area, the applicant is proposes a 36-foot right-of-way with a swale located to the east, adjacent to the internal road. This swale will provide stormwater management credit and be maintained by the applicant. Staff is requesting a 40-foot right-of-way that is consistent with the rest of the internal road to allow for maintenance of the road section including street lights placed behind the curb. The 40-foot right-of-way would encroach on a small portion of the sidewalk and the proposed swale. At this time, staff including Public Works and Forestry is evaluating the need for a 40-foot right-of-way in the historic section.

- Proposed median at West Montgomery Avenue and entrance to development – At the entrance into the site, the applicant proposes a median between the two lanes exiting and one lane entrance into the development. The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) on public streets recommends this median. The proposed median will have a “rolled” curb, which would allow for a vehicle to go over it and no signs to identify that a median is there. However, staff recommends a sign be installed on the median and the applicant provide truck turning templates to ensure the turning movement can be made safely. The signs would identify that a median is there and enhances safety of vehicles. The truck turning templates would have to show that large trucks could make a right turn from West Montgomery Avenue onto the internal road. The applicant has suggested that the signs are not necessary but they would like to keep the rolled curb median. If the applicant cannot show that large trucks can make the right turn into the development with the median, staff then recommends that the median be removed.

- Location of private utilities and decorative walls – On several lots in the development, the applicant proposes private storm drains, which run perpendicular under the decorative retaining walls in the front yards. The applicant proposes that the homeowners association maintain these storm drains and retaining walls. Staff requests that the storm drains not be placed underneath the walls, since it will make them difficult for maintenance and repair. While the storm drains start in the front yard before the walls, many of them go further into the lots and between houses where it would be difficult for access to them since there is no driveway in the area. The applicant maintains that the retaining walls will be mountable for a truck or the wall can be removed, and therefore, it should not be an issue.



- Location of Electrical transformers – The applicant proposes four electrical transformers throughout the development, in a concrete vault. The vault will sit below grade with a

grate at surface level. The applicant proposes the vault to be located between the curb and the sidewalk. The proposed location is in the seven-foot tree lawn which is located in the public right-of-way. The approved resolution (Attachment #1) allows them to be located in the tree lawn, if approved by Public Works. However, staff would prefer the applicant install the electrical transformers outside of the right-of-way and in the public utility easement, behind the sidewalk.

- Grading – Staff is evaluating the grading of the entire site as well as at each individual home. At the time of construction of each home, the applicant is required and has agreed to submit a plat showing the grading.
- Installation of the landscaping in the buffers – Staff will evaluate the applicant's proposal for the timing of installation of the landscape buffers. The time frame will be incorporated into the Construction Phasing Plan, which is approved by the Planning Commission.
- Houses on Thomas Street – Staff is concerned with grading of the three houses that front on Thomas Street. The Thomas Street grade in front of these homes is actually higher than the internal road grade. Due to this grade difference and a two-foot decorative wall along the lot frontage, this prevents surface water from reaching Thomas Street. Therefore, inlets are proposed in the front of the homes. Staff is requesting the applicant provide further detail including a profile of this portion of the site.

Meetings

The next meeting for this Detailed Application is tentatively scheduled for October 25, 2006.

Notification

Notices were sent to approximately 1,380 residents and the Rose Hill, Rose Hill Falls and Thirty Oaks Homeowners Association as well as the West End Citizens Association.

Attachments

1. Planned Residential Unit Resolution 3-06
2. Stormwater Concept letter (circle 47)
3. Site Plan (circle 49)
4. Landscape Plan (circle 56)