



Frieda Fromm-Reichmann Cottage

Name of Property: Frieda Fromm-Reichmann Cottage
City, State: Rockville, MD
Significant Dates: 1936-1956
NHL Criteria: 2
Theme: VI. Expanding Science and Technology
4. effects on lifestyle and health

Previous Recognition:

National Historic Context: XIII. Science
C. Biological
4. Psychology

NHL Significance:

- The cottage is associated with Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann (1889-1957), a leading figure in American psychiatry renowned for her pioneering contributions to the treatment of schizophrenia, a serious mental illness that interferes with a person's ability to think clearly, manage emotions, make decisions, and relate to others.
- She served as director of psychotherapy at Chestnut Lodge in Rockville, Maryland, the premier center for the psychoanalytically-oriented treatment of schizophrenia. She lived and worked on the grounds of the institution in this cottage the Lodge built for her where she could treat the majority of patients sent over from the nearby main hospital building. The Lodge itself was destroyed by fire in June 2009.
- Between 1936 and 1956, Fromm-Reichmann crafted her technique for treating schizophrenics and set the standard for treating people suffering severe mental disorder. This profound reworking of basic psychoanalytic ideas radically transformed what it meant to be a patient and redefined the posture of the therapist. Fromm-Reichmann laid out this paradigmatic shift of American psychiatry in her seminal work, *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy* (1950), which became reading for psychiatrists in training during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.



Integrity:

- Through the stewardship of the property’s owner, Peerless Rockville, the cottage retains a high degree of integrity. The organization undertook a 2009 restoration based on historic photos and interviews with those who knew Fromm-Reichmann. Thus, the vast majority of the essential physical features that enable the property to convey its significance as the place where Dr. Fromm-Reichmann worked up to 18 hours a day are intact.
- Materials on the cottage’s screened-in rear porch changed from wood panels on the bottom and windows above, to all screen. Despite this change, the porch retains its original dimensions, open feeling, and intended use. The slate roof may have originally been covered with asphalt shingles as shown in the original roof plans. These materials have a similar appearance in size and color, and the change may have taken place during the period of significance.
- The institutional setting has been compromised by the loss of the Lodge hospital building north of the cottage and by recent residential construction south of the cottage. The loss of the Lodge building and its relationship to the cottage is minimized by the fact that the original open space between the two buildings exists to preserve the route Dr. Fromm-Reichmann and her patients traveled between the cottage and the Lodge. The single-family homes south of the cottage replaced some buildings that had been part of the institution and built out of public view. These large homes are oriented in an east/west direction while the cottage’s modest size and its northerly orientation to the historic road uniquely sets it apart from any perceived association with the later residential construction.

Owner of Property: Peerless Rockville, Historic Preservation, Ltd., a nonprofit, community-based organization.

Acres of Property: Less than one acre



Origins of Nomination: The nomination was initiated by a scholar with the concurrence of the property owner. The Frieda Fromm-Reichmann cottage was one of two properties chosen to use funds that the NPS had allocated for the identification and nomination of resources illustrating women's history in the United States. With the funds a consultant was chosen to write the nomination.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Designation would highlight the collaboration between the NPS and a community organization to showcase a significant property and its continued preservation and recognition. Open five days a year to the public, generations of visitors would be able to stand in Dr. Fromm-Reichmann's office and consulting room where she wrote her classic work and treated patients. Overall, it would interpret the historic contribution that Dr. Fromm-Reichmann herself, along with her colleagues at Chestnut Lodge, made to the history of psychiatry in the United States.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (as of November 5, 2020):

- Nancy Pickard, Executive Director, Peerless Rockville – 11/2/2020
- Mary A. van Balgooy, Executive Director, Society of Women Geographers – 11/3/2020
- Mayor and City Council, City of Rockville, Maryland – 11/4/2020



Frieda Fromm-Reichmann

National Historic Landmarks Committee Comments:

- Identified issues regarding the building's architect and date of construction, photo captions, and clarifying information on the maps which will be addressed in the revised nomination.

National Historic Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Frieda Fromm-Reichmann Cottage in Rockville, Maryland, as a National Historic Landmark, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: