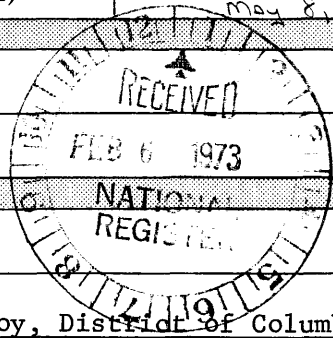


PH0011703

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	May 8, 1973



1. NAME

COMMON:
Meridian House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Washington International Center

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
1630 Crescent Place, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington (Congressman Walter E. Fauntroy, District of Columbia)

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
District of Columbia	11	District of Columbia	001

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Meridian House Foundation

STREET AND NUMBER:
1630 Crescent Place, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:
6th and D Streets, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Proposed District of Columbia additions to the National Register of Historic Places recommended by the Joint Committee on Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: March 7, 1968 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
National Capital Planning Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
1325 G Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Meridian House is located at 1630 Crescent Place, west of 16th Street off Meridian Hill Park. This 18th century French style mansion designed by John Russell Pope and its completely landscaped grounds work together as an architectural whole.

Meridian House is located to the east of the White-Meyer House and faces north on Crescent Place; the property extends west to 17th Street and south to Belmont Place. The house is enclosed by concrete walls with limestone facing; each series of raised panels on the walls is separated by piers capped by marble spheres or vases. The entrance court screen on the north is convex and terminated at opposite ends by wooden double gates. The property is extended to the south by a landscaped terrace built on a 14'-6" high platform at first floor height. (The platform originally accommodated a laundry, garage, storage rooms, and chauffeurs' quarters.) The total frontage of these buildings on Belmont Place is approximately 140 feet.

The north elevation of the house is three and one half stories, measuring 55 feet from finished grade to roof ridge. Since the basement floor is built into the terraced platform to the south, this building rises two and one half stories (45 feet) on the south. The house is 78'-6" square. The north and south elevations are divided into three bays with a central bow. The north entrance bow is semi-hexagonal; the south bow is semi-elliptical.

The base of this limestone-sheathed building has a block cap. On the north elevation, the basement and the first floor are separated by a block string course. This moulding provides a base for the first floor. The facade is terminated at each end and at the corners by pilasters which rise to support the cornice. All the windows in the house are casement; the basement windows have decorative cast iron grilles. Each first and second story window is on raised ground broken by a scrolled keystone (with the exception of the bay above the north entrance which has a keystone carved like a human mask), and each bay has louvered shutters. The first floor windows have fillet sills with semi-circular nosing. The first and second floor windows have decorative cast iron railings. The exception to the above are the semi-circular headed windows which flank the north entrance. These windows rest on the string course separating the first and basement floors; in the center of each bay this moulding is interrupted by a console which supports an urn.

The north entrance stoop is approached by four risers with treads having semi-circular nosing. The oak, double entrance door has lattice marquetry panels and raised middle and upper panels. The limestone bolection architrave is capped by a panelled frieze and interrupted by a decorative keystone. The architrave is set within a splayed, semi-circular archway having an ornamental key in the form of a helmeted head with swags. The arch panel is pierced by an oculus flanked by carved sprays.

Ionic columns in-antis separate the first floor bays of the semi-elliptical bow of the south elevation. The second floor has acanthus-leaf pilasters. The two floors are separated by a Tuscan string course having a plain frieze and block cap. The lines of the string course are carried across the south bow columns as a full entablature which serves as a shallow balcony for the second floor. The balcony has a decorative cast iron railing. The three

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

FEB 6 1973

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) Constructed 1921-23

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated Meridian House (The Washington International Center) a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. John Russell Pope was commissioned by Irwin Boyle Laughlin (a Jones and Laughlin Steel heir and noted diplomat) to build Meridian House, which was completed by 1923. This 18th Century French style mansion is located on Crescent Place in the Meridian Hill area of Washington. The house presently serves as the Washington International Center. The purpose of the Center is to acquaint overseas visitors with contemporary life in the United States. The house with its well landscaped and terraced grounds, and its excellent interiors has been well maintained.

The site of Meridian House is a part of Hall and Elvans' Meridian Hill Subdivision of 1867. In 1912 the property was purchased by Irwin Boyle Laughlin, the grandson of one of the founders of Jones and Laughlin Steel. He held many important diplomatic posts including Secretary of the Embassy in London from 1912 to 1917; United States Minister to Greece from 1924 to 1926, and Ambassador to Spain from 1929 to 1933.

Assessment records indicate that construction of the house began about 1921 and was completed in 1923. Laughlin, a friend of the diplomat Henry White, built his house next to White and selected the same architect, John Russell Pope. Pope (1874-1937) enjoyed a reputation as one of this country's most notable architects and designed numerous buildings in this country as well as abroad. In London he designed the Duveen wing of the British Museum and the new sculpture halls of the Tate Gallery. In Washington he was responsible for the National Gallery of Art and the Jefferson Memorial as well as many other private and public buildings.

In 1923 Laughlin's wife purchased the lot adjoining the property's western border and another purchase in 1929 extended the property's boundary to 17th Street. Irwin died in 1941, but his wife continued to live in the house until 1956.

In 1960, Laughlin's daughter sold the property to the American Council on Education. The Washington International Center was established by ACE to provide orientation for overseas visitors to the U.S. Center programs are conducted in Meridian House which was acquired through a grant by the Ford Foundation. The Center is presently owned and administered by Meridian House International, a non-profit cultural and educational organization.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Architectural information compiled by the Commission of Fine Arts. (Jeffery Carson). Information now on file at the Commission of Fine Arts.
 Withey, Henry F. and Elise Rathburn Withey. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc. 1970.
 "Laughlin, Irwin Boyle." National Cyclopedia of American Biography. Vol. XXX New York: James White and Company, 1943. p. 365.
 Columbia Real Estate Company. Meridian House Deed Searches, Cases 85875, 190153, 191675. Washington, D.C.
 Information brochures supplied by the Washington International Center.

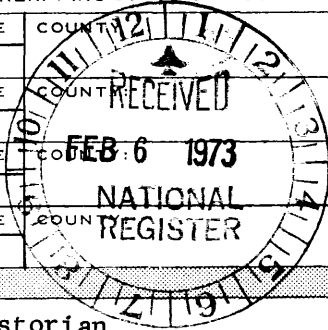
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38° 09' 12"	77° 02' 09"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **37,125 Square feet**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Leonard Gerson, Urban Historian**
Suzanne Ganschietz, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION: **National Capital Planning Commission** DATE: **Dec. 7, 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Washington 325 G Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **District of Columbia** CODE: **11**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: *[Signature]*
 Title: Deputy Mayor-Commissioner
 Date: _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/8/73

ATTEST: *[Signature]*
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 4 26 73

12/28/88 12/28/88 12/28/88

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

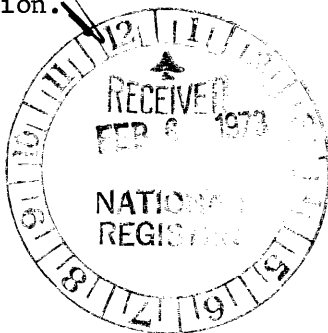
(Number all entries)

7. Description - Meridian House

French doors of the south bow have semi-circular transoms with moulded impostes and decorative keystones. The French doors flanking the bow are each on a raised ground; both doors have a rectangular transom and a scrolled keystone.

The full Tuscan entablature has a diminutive architrave. The cornice is capped by a panelled balustrade with urn balusters centered over each bay. The slate roof is mansard in shape. The north and south elevations have three, segmentally-arched and hooded casement dormers; the east and west elevations each have four. (The exception is the bay over the north entrance, which has a semi-circular head and return hood.)

The hexagonal entrance bow gives access to the circular entrance stair hall. The curved double stair with its wrought and cast iron arabesque railing rises to the central gallery on the first floor. The gallery with its mirrored walls and doors with ovolo architraves with oval paintings in the 18th century manner leads to the south to the oval loggia. Here the doorways and raised wall panels are flanked by Ionic pilasters. To the east of the entrance hall are the library with wood panelling painted green and gilded mouldings and the drawing room also painted green. To the west of the entrance hall is the dining room with a 16th century tapestry framed by an ovolo moulding in its west wall. The breakfast rooms, the pantry and service core are also located on the west side. The second floor has a central hall and utility core with periphery bedroom suites. The third floor has a central light court, surrounded by a corridor with periphery servants' quarters. A studio room is on the south. The interior has been well maintained and is in an excellent state of preservation.





RECEIVED
FEB 6 1973
NATIONAL REGISTER

7790219" W. Long.

HILTON HOTEL
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

KLOPAMA PARK

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

NEW HAMPSHIRE

PORTNER

II E C 4

II E 55

II E 43

II E 46

E 788,000

E 789,000

E 800,000