

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **AUG 21 1986**

date entered

SEP 22 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic North Meridian Street Historic District

and or common North Meridian Street Historic District

2. Location

See continuation sheet. (Properties on west side of North Meridian from street & number 4000-5694; and east side of North Meridian from 4001-5747 N/A not for publication)

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Marion code 097

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership

street & number See continuation sheet

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds

street & number Room 721, City-County Building

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See continuation sheet has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

North Meridian Street between 40th Street and Westfield Boulevard maintains the integrity and image that it had in the 1920s and 30s when it experienced its largest growth of new construction. With the exception of the Meridian Street Methodist Church and Tarkington Towers, the district is dominated by large, single family residences, most of which were constructed in various styles such as French Eclectic, Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, and Neo-Classical. The few additional residential intrusions which do exist are set back from the street and do not interrupt the continuity of the streetscape.

Immediately north of 40th Street the streetscape changes drastically--the area is treelined and predominantly residential (Photo #1). The area to the south is devoid of trees and dominated by commercial architecture, particularly apartment buildings (Photo #2). The continuity of the streetscape remains much the same until 55th Street where the four-lane road widens (Photo #3). Here, the district loses some of the charm of the narrower street section; however, the architecture, the continued deep setbacks, the treelined character of the street and substantially landscaped front lawns unite the two areas and provide the necessary continuity.

The majority of the district looks much like the streetscapes seen in Photos #42 and #43. Typically, the houses are set back far enough from the street to make them less visible. The abundance of trees provides both privacy and a sense of full, long-established landscaping. Other landscape features such as stone walls, iron fences, and hedge, also contribute to the sense of privacy and exclusiveness.

The northern part of the district above 55th Street contains houses that are smaller and interspersed with more intrusions (Photo #4). Basically, development progressed northward and construction in this area occurred later, which explains the changes in design and higher concentration of non-contributing buildings near Westfield Boulevard. Despite this there remain sufficient contributing structures to justify including the area. Westfield Boulevard and the Indianapolis Water Company canal, which it borders, form a very definite geographic boundary to the north end of the district. Houses constructed north of the boulevard and canal are more modern and less grand than typical residences in the district.

The area that comprises the district was originally fruit orchards. Between 1878 and 1948 it was platted into 22 subdivisions with typical lots ranging in size from one to two acres. The largest single lot, the property at 4245 North Meridian Street, is five acres. Typically, lots within the district are well landscaped, often with thickly wooded areas and well-maintained shrubbery and lawns.

Within the district, construction dates from the early 20th century until approximately 1960. The significant period of construction dates from 1900 to 1935, with the heaviest period of growth being in the 1920s and 30s. Construction may be divided into three periods: (1) early farmhouses and summer homes; (2) period designs of the major years of construction--c. 1910 to 1935; and (3) non-contributing post-1935 structures.

Houses that remain from the earliest period of construction are generally less formal than those built during the main years of the district's development. Several reveal the original farming use of the land. At least two were summer retreats from the more urbanized parts of the city.

The structure at 5694 North Meridian (Photo #6) appears to be the oldest remaining building in the district. The two and one-half story frame structure was built in the Free Classic style c. 1900. The palladian window in the gable facade is a common feature of the style and one of the few enrichments to the otherwise straightforward structure. The building,

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–1935	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1900–1936 **Builder/Architect** Multiple

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The North Meridian Street Historic District is architecturally significant because it exhibits a high concentration of outstanding buildings in a variety of high-style designs. Residences in the French eclectic mode, Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, Neo-Classical, and Prairie styles characterize the architecture of the district. The finest craftsmanship and materials were used in the construction of these luxurious homes in Indianapolis's most prestigious residential area.

Among the notable Indianapolis architects who produced designs in the district were Merritt Harrison, Burns and James, D. A. Bohlen & Son, Frank Hunter, and Herbert L. Bass. Merritt Harrison, the architect of Lockefield Gardens, Indianapolis's first effort at public housing (listed on the National Register February 28, 1983), designed the Italian Renaissance influenced residence at 4025 North Meridian (Photo #47), and the Jacobethan structure at 4041 North Meridian. Harrison had a long and successful career in the city. In 1939 he designed the Coliseum on the Indiana State Fairgrounds with Russ, and in 1952 he designed the Meridian Street Presbyterian Church, which is also in the district. Harrison also designed several public schools in the city.

Dietrich A. Bohlen was one of the most successful and prolific architects to work in Indianapolis in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a young man Bohlen worked with Francis Costigan on the Indianapolis Asylum for the Blind. In 1853 he founded the firm of D. A. Bohlen & Son. One of the most significant of the firm's downtown designs is the City Market of 1886. They also designed the Majestic Building (National Register November 20, 1980), and Arlington High School. The firm's designs for religious and residential architecture include the Roberts Park Methodist Church, 1873 (National Register, August 19, 1982), and the Morris-Butler House, 1862. The firm carried on the same quality design after D. A. Bohlen's death in 1890. In the North Meridian Street District they are represented by the eclectic residence at 4162 (Photo #48).

Frank B. Hunter provided the plans for six houses in the district, including the William Thompson House, 4343 North Meridian, which served as the Governor's official residence for a period of time (Photo #9). Hunter worked in several design idioms. The residences he designed at 4045 (Photo #49) and 4137 (Photo #50) North Meridian are in the Colonial Revival style, while his design for 4401 North Meridian is in the Jacobethan mode. The Shaneberger House, 4403 North Meridian (Photos #20, 21) designed in 1923, displays Hunter's skill in combining various stylistic elements into a cohesive whole. Hunter, who was named the official architect for the City of Indianapolis in 1922, designed more than 600 structures before his retirement in 1938.³

The firm of Rubush and Hunter was founded in 1904 by Preston C. Rubush and Edgar O. Hunter. The two architects met while employed by the architectural firm of Vonnegut and Bohn. Rubush and Hunter produced designs for some of the most significant buildings throughout the city, including the Circle Theatre, 1916 (National Register June 16, 1980, restored 1985), the Indiana State Museum (National Register October 29, 1974), and the Columbia Club (National Register January 27, 1983). They are represented in the district by their design for the residence at 4310 North Meridian Street (Photo #51).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 113

Quadrangle name Indianapolis West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	1 6	5 7 2 1 4 0	4 4 1 2 2 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	1 6	5 7 2 2 2 0	4 4 0 8 8 4 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	1 6	5 7 2 0 4 0	4 4 0 8 8 4 0
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D	1 6	5 7 2 0 0 0	4 4 1 1 9 7 0
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E			
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F			
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G			
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H			
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Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Eric Utz; Suzanne Rollins

organization	<u>Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana</u>	date	<u>November 26, 1985</u>
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street & number	<u>1028 North Delaware</u>	telephone	<u>317/638-5264</u>
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city or town	<u>Indianapolis</u>	state	<u>Indiana 46202</u>
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12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title	<u>Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer</u>	date	<u>7-23-86</u>
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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 9/22/86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

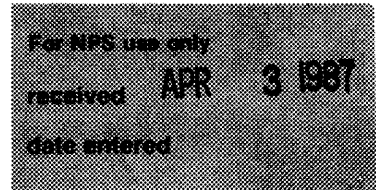
date

Chief of Registration

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Inclusive Addresses:

North Meridian Street

4000	4414	5050	5430
4001	4420	5060	5437
4011	4425	5104	5440
4025	4430	5105	5445
4041	4450	5110	5455
4045	4455	5111	5500
4057	4456	5115	5501
4061	4465	5125	5519
4118	4475	5130	5520
4122	4480	5140	5525
4127	4501	5141	5530
4130	4510	5145	5540
4131	4515	5148	5545
4136	4519	5151	5548
4137	4525	2 West 52nd	5555
4142	4528	5201 N.Meridian	5556
4146	4531	5207	5557
4150	4536	5211	5601
4155	4544	5217	5606
4156	4555	5220	5616
4162	4580	5230	5617
4204	4605	5235	5627
4226	4611	5240	5630
4245	4617	5241	5639
4270	4621	5243	5650
4280	4747	5250	5655
4285	4750	5252	5660
4290	4801	5260	5665
4305	4802	5265	5670
4310	4810	5272	5675
4311	4814	5275	5677
4320	4821	5300	5678
4330	4830	5320	5681
4343	4833	5323	5690
4350	4906	5330	5693
4356	4909	5335	5694
4366	4919	5354	5701
4375	4925	5360	5707
4400	4936	5363	5715
4401	4950	5401	5723
4403	5001	5402	5735
4404	5003	5417	5741
4409	5008	5420	5747
4411	5019	5425	

Non-Contributing Structures:

North Meridian Street

4000
4305
4330
4455
4465
4475
4515
4528
4536
4580
4617
4802
4821
5211
5240
5360
5363
5401
5500
5501
5230
5548
5556
5616
5630
5660
5665
5670
5675
5677
5681
5701
5707
5715
5735

4343 North Meridian Street was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on June 1, 1982.

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originally constructed as a residence, has been used as a restaurant since the early 1920s under such names as The Seven Mile Inn, The Homestead, The Flagpole Townhouse, and currently as Dodd's Townhouse. The original porch has been closed in and other alterations made to accommodate the restaurant function.

The house at 5723 North Meridian was built in 1907 as a farmhouse. The lot on which the house stands is heavily wooded and informally landscaped, a vestige of the original farm of nearly 200 acres. The house is a straightforward, two-story, end gable structure in the Colonial Revival style. The entrance is surrounded by sidelights and a transom. Eight double-hung sash windows are ranked across the front with paired casement lights above the entrance. The house still has its original slate roof but was recently sided with aluminum.

The other two structures which predate the major building phase of 1910-1935 were initially summer homes. The garage of the house at 4343 North Meridian (Photo #8) was originally a small summer home built in 1904 by Harry D. Lane, an auditor for the Indianapolis stockyards. Constructed of brick, the one and one-half story building has a jerkin head, asphalt shingle roof with two hipped dormers. In 1920 the Italian Renaissance inspired house (Photo #9) which now stands on the lot was built by William N. Thompson, president of the Stutz Motor Car Company of America, and the summer home was converted into a four-car garage and servants' quarters.

The Evans-Blankenbaker house at 5019 North Meridian (Photo #10) was also originally a summer home. The house was constructed in 1901 as a small, one-story cottage and extensively re-modeled in 1907 into a two-story Georgian Revival house by Herbert L. Bass, noted Indianapolis architect. This alteration, like those made at 4343 North Meridian, reflect the change in this area from a rural farm-summer home location into a place for fine, year-round residences.

The primary phase of construction in the district occurred between 1920-1935. A variety of eclectic and revival styles are represented in structures built during this period. Several houses in the district reveal the interest in French medieval and Renaissance architecture that was popular in many cities at the turn of the century.

The Sears-Townsend House at 5008 North Meridian (Photo #11) displays a number of stylistic features found in some 17th century French architecture. The steeply pitched, hipped slate roof covering an irregular mass of brick with limestone trim is reminiscent of Chateau de Balleroy. The strong vertical of the chimney is also a characteristic feature. The main facade, while not symmetrical, is unified around the classically treated, one-story, limestone entry. Only the triple arched windows on the north wing of the main facade are untypical of chateau architecture and reveal the architect's freedom to combine elements from several idioms. The house was designed and built on speculation in 1930 by Henry L. Simons, a prominent Indianapolis contractor who built a number of houses in the district. William H. Sears, president of Sears Cabinet Factory, was the first occupant. The current owner, Earl C. Townsend, purchased the property in 1956. Townsend served as Marion County Prosecutor from 1943-45 and authored the book, Birdstones of the North American Indian, in 1959.

The MacGill-Wemmer House at 5260 North Meridian (Photo #12) also exemplifies several characteristics of French Eclectic design. Like the Sears-Townsend House, this two-story structure has cross-hipped projections from the main mass. A hipped wall dormer and two segmental arched wall dormers break the roofline at various points across the main facade.

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Half-timbering with irregularly patterned brick infill on the second level of one of the cross-hipped projections breaks up the ashlar stone facade. Dressed limestone surrounding all windows and doors also provides textural relief to the facade. The stone surrounding the window above the entrance is carved as elongated scrolls.

The house was constructed on speculation by Henry L. Simons in 1930. Mr. Robert MacGill, manager of Indiana branches of the Crane Plumbing Company, and his family resided in the house until it was sold to William H. Wemmer in 1934. Mr. Wemmer established the law firm of Rauch, Wemmer and Chase in 1940, and was both president of the Indianapolis Bar Association and Republican candidate for Mayor in 1947.

Houses influenced by medieval forms were also popular in eclectic design. Both the Brant-Weinhardt House, 4833 North Meridian (Photo #13), and the Kobin-Nafe House, 5060 North Meridian, use towers combined with other medieval features to yield a picturesque architectural composition. The Brant-Weinhardt House, built in 1932, has a crenelated tower at the juncture of the two main wings of the structure. The gabled wing has a steeply pitched roof and battered wall. Windows in both this section and the tower are leaded. A narrow, louvered lancet is centered in the tall gable. The lower, north wing of the house is marked by an irregularly patterned slate roof and elliptical-arched terrace doors with leaded lights. The randomly corbelled brick in the tower and irregular brickwork pattern around all openings complete the picturesque design.

The tower of the Kobin-Nafe House (Photo #14), with its conical cap similar to those found on many medieval chateaus, is more French in spirit. Here, half-timbering with irregularly patterned infill, randomly corbelled brick walls, a diaper pattern on the tower and the shake shingle roof, all give a picturesque appearance.

The Pearson-Harget House at 5220 North Meridian (Photo #15) is Jacobethan in spirit and, like 4833 and 5060 North Meridian, picturesque in massing. The structure is two and one-half stories tall and constructed of randomly patterned brick with limestone trim. The steeply pitched slate roof flares at the eave to create a deep overhang. Casement windows with small, rectangular panes and diamond panes, complete the medieval appearance.

A number of North Meridian residences take their inspiration from English medieval architecture. The Aufderheide-Culp House, 4950 North Meridian (Photo #16) was designed and built by Henry L. Simons in 1929. The two-story brick house has an irregular plan comprised of a main wing expanded by cross-gable projections and secondary wings. This irregular plan yields a picturesque grouping of gables, bays, chimneys and roof shapes that harkens back to the rambling nature of many medieval English manors. The two cross-gable projections that break up the main facade are asymmetrical in size and placement. The larger gable is enriched by vertical half-timbering members with herringbone brickwork infill. A polygonal bay projects from the first floor of this wing. Three gothic arches provide access to the semi-enclosed entranceway beneath a small, half-timbered wall dormer. A wide Tudor arch punctuates the wall at the north end of the facade. The random patterned slate roof gives a textural contrast to the smooth brickwork of the walls. Contrast is also achieved by the limestone frames and heavy mullions that emphasize the windows. Rectangular hoodmolds provide another English medieval feature for many of the windows. Rudolph Aufderheide, who owned the house from 1929-43, was president of Commonwealth Loan Company, which was formed by his father in 1887. The house's second owner, Charles C. Culp, was an executive with the Stokely-VanCamp Company. His family owned the house until 1973.

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The Hugh Love House at 5354 North Meridian (Photo #17), built in 1930, displays many of the features found in the Aufderheide-Culp House in a scaled-down version. A cross-gabled projection with semi-octagonal bay and a large wall dormer break up the main mass. A limestone Gothic arch frames the entrance. Half-timbering elements with both brick and stucco infill are treated more decoratively here than in the previous example. Heavy brick quoins reflect the mixture of medieval and Renaissance elements found in some Tudor residences

The residences at 4270 and 4403 North Meridian also demonstrate the early 20th century interest in Tudor design. The Hare-Tarkington House at 4270 North Meridian (Photo #18) built in 1911, displays the typical Tudor features of half-timbering and stucco infill. However, Craftsman features such as the roof overhang with knee bracing and the shed dormer have been incorporated to make this residence a more free interpretation of Tudor architecture. The two and one-half story carriage house (Photo #19) which was extensively remodeled in 1985 after being partially destroyed by fire, carries out the half-timbering, roof overhang with knee bracing, and stucco treatment that characterizes the main house. The Shaneberger House at 4403 North Meridian (Photo #20) was designed by architect Frank B. Hunter in 1923 for Roy C. Shaneberger, the founder and president of Progress Laundry Company. Tudor elements are seen in the half-timbered symmetrical front gables and stone-mullioned first floor windows. Again, these have been combined freely with elements from other idioms, such as the classical balustrade defining the terrace and surmounting the north and south solaria, and the tile shingle roof. As at the Hare-Tarkington House, the carriage house here (Photo #21) reflects the main house with its two half-timbered cross gables. The double carriage doors on the ground floor are the original doors.

The Governor's Residence at 4750 North Meridian, and the Potts-Sauer House at 5540 North Meridian (Photo #23) are also Jacobethan in spirit. The Governor's Residence was originally constructed in 1928 for Rev. Harry E. Campbell, associate pastor of the First Presbyterian Church and chairman of the Ecumenical and World Service Committee of the Church Federation of Indianapolis.

The most salient Jacobethan features are the two-story, semi-hexagonal bay with grouped windows, limestone trim and crenelated roofline, and the stepped gable parapets rising above the roofline. The brick structure has an irregular plan with several projecting wings which also contribute to its resemblance of a rambling Jacobethan manor house. The Potts-Sauer House was built in 1930 by Fred L. Palmer, an Indianapolis contractor. Typical of the Jacobethan style, the house has asymmetrical parapeted cross gables on the main facade. The larger of the two gables is balanced at the other end of the facade by the massive chimney which rises from a rough stone base. The semi-hexagonal, one-story bay with crenelation is another typical Jacobethan feature. The segmental arched central entrance is flanked by segmental arched windows and surmounted by a large, half-round arched window with an elaborate stained glass design. This whole entrance motif is framed in smooth cut limestone and is more French than Jacobethan in character.

In addition to various European styles, the American Colonial Revival also was popular in the district during the period of significance. The residences at 4919 and 5693 North Meridian represent two forms the Colonial Revival took. The Baur-Booker House at 4919 North Meridian (Photo #24) was constructed in 1924 by the Burns Realty Company. It is a two-story, five-bay brick mass. The central pavilion is defined by Doric pilasters. The modillion cornice that runs across the entire roofline rakes over this pavilion to form an open pediment. A one-story Corinthian portico covers the arched entrance while a decorative cartouche with garlands and pendants fills the space below the cornice. The flanking fenestration is of six-over-six, double-hung sash. The brick construction, symmetry and classical treatment of the central pavilion impart a high Georgian character.

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In contrast, the Griffin House at 5693 North Meridian (Photo #25) is designed more in the spirit of a Georgian influenced New England farmhouse. The two-story frame structure rests on the high part of a sloping lot giving it a commanding position over the well-landscaped property. The entrance is articulated by a one-story Doric order supporting an open pediment. A modillioned cornice runs unbroken across the entire main facade with returns at the gable ends. The same cornice in raking form defines the end gables. Three pedimented dormers project from the roof. Two one-story frame wings project from the northwest and southwest corners to define a terrace across the front of the house. Because they are not symmetrical they impart a less formal Georgian character than the residence at 4919 North Meridian.

The first owner of the residence, Mr. Ransom Griffin, was a general sales agent with the Central Coal & Coke Company. From 1925-31 the house was owned by Ulysses G. Baker, president of the Baker Brothers Glass Company. Mr. Ralph Edgerton, president of Edgerton and Company, owned the property from 1932-1940. Edgerton's company, a decorating firm, was responsible for the World War I Triumphal Arch on Meridian Street, and the interior decor of the Indianapolis Athletic Club. From 1945-56, John L. Mutz, a restaurant chain executive and father of current Indiana Lieutenant Governor John Mutz, owned the property.

Some structures in the district are so eclectic they defy stylistic categorization. The symmetry and classical treatment of the entrance of 5151 North Meridian (Photo #26) are features shared with its Colonial Revival neighbors. However, the hipped tile roof with deep overhang and window treatment with multi-pane sash over single sash are drawn from other idioms and yield a Renaissance villa quality.

The Neo-Classical style, popular in America for both commercial and residential architecture after the 1893 Columbian Exposition is represented in the district by residences at 4411, 4425, and 5417 North Meridian. The Osborn-Cadle House, 4411 North Meridian (Photo #27) was built for Dr. and Mrs. Wells M. Osborn in 1925. It was purchased in 1940 by the widow of evangelist E. Howard Cadle, who formed Cadle Tabernacle. Cadle was most famous for his radio program, The Nation's Family Prayer Service. The main facade of the two-story brick structure is dominated by a grand Corinthian portico. A one-story veranda, whose flat roof is supported by paired Corinthian columns, runs across the main facade.

The Stillson House, 4245 North Meridian (Photo #28) was constructed c. 1909 for Dr. Joseph Stillson, one of the first Indianapolis physicians to specialize in ear, nose and throat treatment.¹ Like its neighbor at 4411, the two and one-half story brick structure has a monumental portico over the entrance. Here, the portico is semi-circular and supported by an Ionic order. A one-story solarium articulated by an Ionic order projects from the south facade. The centrally located door with fanlight is flanked by a pair of sidelights and engaged Doric columns.

The residence at 5417 North Meridian (Photo #29) was, at one time, the home of author Meredith Nicholson, Pulitzer Prize winning author of The House of 1,000 Candles, which was published in 1905. It later served as the residence of Warren G. Fairbanks, son of a former United States Vice President, Charles W. Fairbanks. Warren Fairbanks was president of the Indianapolis News Publishing Company.

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Of the three examples of Neo-Classical style cited in the district this is the grandest and is, in fact, one of the grandest homes in the district. The main mass of the house is two stories tall, of brick construction, and surmounted by a shingle gable roof. One-story, flat roof, brick wings project from the north and south elevations. That on the north serves as a porte-cochere while the one on the south is a solarium. Both are topped by slender wooden balustrades. The dominant feature of the main facade is a monumental portico that covers the central three bays. While the two end bays of the portico are rectangular, the central bay projects as a semi-circle to frame the entrance and grand Palladian window-motif that gives access to the balcony. The portico is supported by eight composite columns. Openings on the ground floor front are half-round, arched French doors that open onto the terrace running across the entire front. The entrance has leaded glass sidelights and transom. The four windows on the second level flanking the central Palladian motif are double-hung, six-over-six sash.

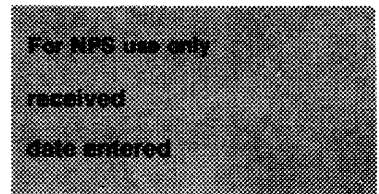
A renewed interest in Italian Renaissance domestic architecture occurred throughout the country from the 1880s-1930s and is represented in the district by the residences at 4356, 4621 and 5050 North Meridian. The symmetry around a central elaborated doorway, arched ground floor openings, and overhanging tile hipped roof, as seen on the John Zazas House at 4356 North Meridian (Photo #30), are characteristic features of this architectural mode. These same elements, combined with a recessed second floor arcaded porch, are also found on the Madden House at 4621 North Meridian (Photo #31). An unusual feature of this house is the polygonal entrance porch supported by six Doric columns which derives its inspiration more from small Roman temple design than from the Italian Renaissance. The house was originally built for John J. Madden, Sr., president of John J. Madden Manufacturing Company, furniture manufacturers.

The residence at 5050 North Meridian (Photo #32), which served as a progressive private school from 1923-26, also exhibits features associated with this renewed interest in the Italian Renaissance design. The school was known as the Orchard School because it is located on land that had been an orchard.² The structure's arched entrance, emphasized by heavily rusticated vouissoirs, is reminiscent of similar treatment on some High Renaissance palazzi.

While not common, there are several interesting examples of Craftsman style and Prairie style houses in the district. In general, these houses are more intimate in scale and less imposing than many of their revival style neighbors. The house at 4420 North Meridian (Photo #33) was built by H. H. Pointer in 1928. It is an excellent example of a craftsman bungalow with firm evidence of the influence of the Greene Brothers' Craftsman architecture. The main mass of the one and one-half story brick structure has a sweeping end gable, shake shingle roof that arcs out to cover the front porch. A steep gabled dormer with projecting bay rises from the roof. The quality of the design is revealed in the exterior detailing. The porch openings all have shoulder brackets which yield an almost oriental silhouette to the opening. The bargeboards running along the gables of the main roof, dormer, and small porch wings on the north side are all carved to create a patterned profile. Half-timbering elements in the end gables and dormer are colored to contrast subtly with the various patterns of brick infill. These elements, combined with leaded glass window treatment and other refinements, impart a very individualistic character to the structure, one of the general goals of Craftsman design.

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The Dell-Moffett House at 4285 North Meridian (Photo #34) has some general stylistic features associated with the Craftsman style but not the degree of individual design seen at 4420 North Meridian. The house is built of brick with half timbering and stucco, and a tile roof, which yield a textural and coloristic variety valued in Craftsman design. This variety is carried out on the carriage house (Photo #35) as well.

The Wolf House, 4136 North Meridian, is one of the finest examples of the Prairie style in Indianapolis. The house was built in 1924 for Arthur Wolf, founder and Chairman of the Board of State Auto Insurance Agency. Designed by Fermor Spencer Cannon, and constructed by Schlegel and Roehm, the two-story brick mass has both the projections and punctures of the rectangular envelope characteristic of the style. A one-story porte-cochere with deep-overhang roof extends from the cove of the house on the north while a similar one-story living wing extends to the south. The northeast and southeast corner of the cove have been cut away to create second floor terraces, while the chimney projects from the front facade and pierces the overhanging roof to create the interplay of form and space that is a hallmark of the style. Decorative detail has been primarily restrained to a limestone belt course, limestone window sills and heavy lintels over the two pair of French doors at the front.

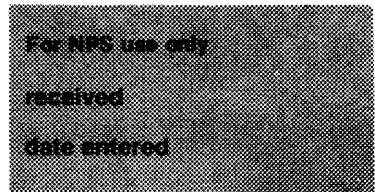
The Shea House, 4366 North Meridian (Photo #37) was designed by Frank B. Hunter and constructed in 1922 by Conder and Culbertson. It has the strong emphasis on horizontality, here established by the brickwork, limestone trim and roof overhangs that is characteristic of the style. Throughout the exterior woodwork and windows is a repeated motif which closely resembles Frank Lloyd Wright's "Tree of Life" design. The design is most easily seen on the main door, sidelights, and blind transom panel.

The largest and most visible intrusions within the district are Tarkington Towers (4000 North Meridian) and the Meridian Street United Methodist Church (5500 North Meridian). Tarkington Towers (Photo #38) is a continuation of the commercial architecture which has traditionally spread northward on Meridian Street, replacing numerous historic homes that once dominated the street. It rises fourteen stories above the southern boundary of the district and exists as a dividing line between the commercialized area south of 40th and the residential section to the north. Though considered an intrusion, the Meridian Street Methodist Church (Photo #39) does maintain a very deep setback which helps control what could be a major interruption of the streetscape. The Georgian Revival structure, designed by Merritt Harrison, one of Indianapolis's most significant architects, in 1950, is sympathetic to the elegant and classic designs which surround it.

There are two basic types of non-contributing residential structures in the district--ranch style homes, built after World War II, and modern interpretations of traditional house styles. The majority of these non-contributing houses are concentrated in the northern part of the district above 56th Street and are ranch style. Generally, these structures have maintained the deep set-backs from Meridian Street established by the older houses in the district. Some have well-established trees close to the street which carry on the landscape character of the district and make the structures less noticeable than they otherwise would be. The house at 4330 is typical of the several ranch style intrusions. Like their contributing counterparts, these structures are well-maintained and so do not detract from the district in that respect.

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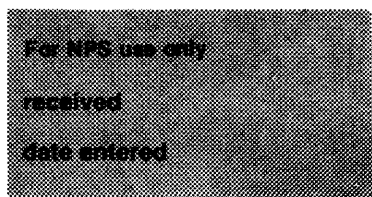
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The house at 4455 North Meridian (Photo #41) represents a scaled-down and simplified variation of larger houses in the district. These homes were built in the early to middle 1940s. The house merges a hipped roof and casement window with Doric columns and sidelights. Only a few of these scaled-down houses are scattered north of 44th Street.

The North Meridian Street Historic District is a catalog of period tastes and architectural styles from the early twentieth century. This two mile corridor contains a concentration of some of the finest homes in the city, set in heavily wooded landscape that retains much of the character and features it had when these elegant homes were first constructed. Its almost totally residential nature, grand scale and strong visual cohesion give this district a clearly identifiable character.

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Surprisingly, a large number of the houses in the North Meridian Street Historic District were built on speculation. Henry L. Simons was responsible for at least fourteen houses in the district--the majority of which were also owned by Simons at the time of construction. His obituary stated that "He was the first local builder to construct \$100,000 homes on a speculative basis."⁴ Simons designed and built the house at 5151 North Meridian Street (Photo #26) for himself and lived there from 1925 until c. 1940. He also built the Sears-Townsend House at 5008 North Meridian (Photo #11), the MacGill-Wemmer House at 5260 (Photo #12), and the Aufderheide-Culp House (Photo #16) at 4950 North Meridian.

The Burns Realty Company and the Maynard Realty Company also constructed a number of houses on a speculative basis. The Burns Company built the house at 4919 North Meridian Street c. 1922 (Photo #52), while the Maynard Realty Company constructed both 5430 and 5440 North Meridian Street c. 1929 (Photo #34).

In 1928 Meridian Street resident Booth Tarkington described the architecture of his neighborhood:

The houses upon this new street--all built within little more than a year--were of the newest fashions, yet not many were of the same fashion. They were of shapes and colors we once should have thought fanciful; indeed, many of them suggested stage settings, and their picturesqueness was so extreme as to give them almost the unsubstantial air of picture book houses. It was obvious that every architect or every owner had planned without thought to what would neighbor the new houses.⁵

Tarkington's description holds true today. These magnificent residences continue to possess the charm and elegance which made them the premier homes of the 1920s.

The prestigious image of the North Meridian Street Historic District stems not only from the architectural styles, but also from the residents who lived there. The area's residents were, and many still are, considered to be among the foremost leaders in various aspects of the community.

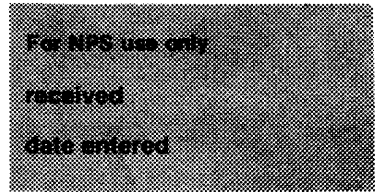
The historic district's past and present is dominated by leaders in the business community. The majority of district residents involved in mercantile activities represent either company founders or top-level executives. Presidents and board chairmen from such organizations as Eli Lilly and Company, P. R. Mallory and Company, Pepsi-Cola, Coca-Cola, and Herff-Jones resided within the area. The automobile industry was well represented in the district through the presidents of the Duesenberg Automobile Corporation, the Cole Motor Car Company, and the Stutz Motor Company of America.

Among the city's leading businessmen were such Meridian Street residents as Harold T. Ames (4544 North Meridian), president of the Duesenberg Automobile Corporation from 1928 to 1935 and founder and chairman of the board of the Midwest National Bank; Dr. Eugene Darrach (4409 North Meridian), organizer of the Interstate Car Company of Indianapolis; Rudolph Domont (5201 North Meridian), chairman of the board of the Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company; Harry J. Herff (4118 North Meridian), co-founder of the Herff-Jones Company, manufacturing jewelers, and Philip R. Mallory (4310 North Meridian), founder of P. R. Mallory & Company, which had its international headquarters in Indianapolis.

Numerous prominent physicians also made their homes along North Meridian Street. Dr. LaRue Carter, nationally known neuropsychiatrist in the 1930s for whom the mental hospital at 1315 West 10th Street was named, lived within the district. Likewise, Dr. Goethe Link,

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internationally renowned for his skill and success in the surgery and treatment of thyroid problems, lived in the district at 4936 North Meridian Street. Specialists and professors of medicine and dentistry have long been associated with the street.

Law is likewise a widely held profession with district residents. Throughout the years there have been numerous partners, senior partners, and founders of Indianapolis law firms who have lived on North Meridian Street. Such men as Indiana Supreme Court Justice Michael L. Fansler and Kurt Pantzer, co-founder of the Bar Association of the Seventh Federal Circuit Court, helped establish the area as the home of many leading attorneys.

Politically, the district was, and still is, home to both elected and appointed top political leaders, the foremost of whom is the Governor. The Governor's Residence has been located within the district twice: first at 4343 North Meridian from 1945 to 1970 (National Register June 1, 1982), and the present residence located at 4750 North Meridian since 1975. In addition to the Governor, there have also been state senators, representatives, and various other political leaders who have resided within the North Meridian Street Historic District. Arthur R. Baxter, whose family owned 5110 North Meridian from 1928 to c.1964, served as a state senator in the 1921 and 1923 sessions. Virginia Murphy Blankenbaker, the current resident of 5019 North Meridian, has served as a state senator since 1981. Several past residents served in the Indiana House of Representatives. Among them were: John C. Hart (5141 North Meridian); Oscar A. Jose (4814 North Meridian), 1941 session; Paul G. Moffett (4285 North Meridian), 1941 and 1943 sessions; and N. Booth Tarkington (4270 North Meridian), 1902 session. Meredith Nicholson (5417 North Meridian) served as Minister to Paraguay in 1933, Minister to Venezuela from 1935 to 1938, and Minister to Nicaragua from 1938 to 1941.

The North Meridian Street Historic District is also known for the literary contributions of its residents. The late 1920s and the 1930s was a golden age for Hoosier authors. Three of Indiana's most well-known authors of that period lived within the district. Novelists Booth Tarkington and Meredith Nicholson, and cartoonist Kin Hubbard made North Meridian Street their homes at various times. In addition to these three men, there were also several other residents of the district who authored non-fiction works, newspaper articles, and technical manuals.

N. Booth Tarkington, who resided at 4270 North Meridian from 1923 until his death in 1946, was a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner for his novels. Mr. Tarkington won the prize first in 1918 for The Magnificent Ambersons and again in 1921 for Alice Adams.

Meredith Nicholson lived at 5417 North Meridian from 1931 to 1932. Nicholson's most popular novel, House of 1000 Candles, was published in 1905. Both he and Booth Tarkington were contemporaries of Hoosier poet James Whitcomb Riley.

Frank McKinney (Kin) Hubbard created the comic strip "Abe Martin of Brown County." The strip, which featured a down-home philosopher, ran from its introduction on December 31, 1904, until its creator's death in 1930. By the time of its final appearance, the comic was syndicated in more than 300 newspapers nation-wide. Hubbard lived at 5437 North Meridian from 1928 until his death in 1930. His widow continued to live there until 1937.

As expected, not only were the residents of the North Meridian Street Historic District among the leaders in their professions, but they also represented the upper echelon of Indianapolis society. The 1920s and 30s saw a flourish of social organizations in the city.

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Several of the district's residents were charter members and founders of various country clubs and social organizations. The 1938 Indianapolis Social Directory, published by the National Social Directory Publishers, listed 55 residents of Meridian Street between 40th Street and Westfield Boulevard. This meant that of all of the houses built by 1938, approximately 40 percent of the households were listed in the Social Directory.⁶

Alfred M. Glossbrenner, who lived in 3202 North Meridian, described the residential area of the street in May, 1928. His words remain as an accurate portrayal of the North Meridian Street Historic District as it stands today:

There is a street in which most citizens take a particular pride through which the host escorts the guest, in which quondam visitors find a point of conversation and to which the traveled person refers as evidence of his experience... And as the city's show window, the section most extensively remembered and discussed this thoroughfare acquires a symbolic character.⁷

The North Meridian Street Historic District continues to serve as a show-place for the city. Today, the district is regulated by the Meridian Street Preservation Commission established by Indiana Code 1971, Title 18, Article 4, Chapter 24. It is the Commission's responsibility to preserve the integrity of the district and maintain design controls over new projects.⁸ Its architecture and residents still stand in confirmation of the area's illustrious reputation.

ENDNOTES

1

"Dr. Joseph O. Stillson," The Indianapolis News, 29 January 1926.

²The Orchard School Catalog, Indianapolis: 1926.

³Paul Donald Brown, ed., Indianapolis Men of Affairs, (Indianapolis: The American Biographical Society, 1938, p. 307.

⁴"Henry L. Simons," (obituary) Indianapolis Times, 18 September 1954.

⁵Booth Tarkington, "The World Does Move," The Saturday Evening Post, 7 July 1928, p. 95.

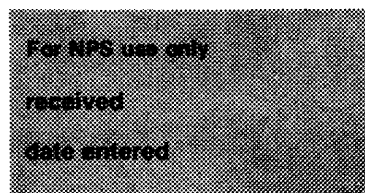
⁶Indianapolis Social Directory, Indianapolis: National Social Directory Publishers, 1938.

⁷A. M. Glossbrenner, "A. M. Glossbrenner Deplores Meridian Commercialization," The Indianapolis Star, 7 May 1928.

⁸Indiana Code 1971, Title 18, Article 4, Chapter 24.

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Indianapolis Social Director. Indianapolis: National Social Directory Publishers, 1938.

The Orchard School Catalog. Indianapolis, 1926.

"Henry L. Simons." Indianapolis Times. 18 September 1954.

"Dr. Joseph O. Stillson." The Indianapolis News. 29 January 1926.

Tarkington, Booth. "The World Does Move." The Saturday Evening Post, 7 July, 1928.

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Verbal Description and Boundaries

The North Meridian Street Historic District consists of properties located along the east and west sides of North Meridian Street. The boundary specifically begins at the northern curb of 40th Street and follows the rear property lines of the houses located on the east and west sides of the street. The boundary continues in a northerly direction across 42nd Street on the west; 43rd Street on the east; Hampton Drive on the west; 45th Street and Meridian Place on the east, 46th, 49th, 52nd, and 56th Streets on the east and west; and 57th Street on the east. The northern end of the boundary is formed by the southern curb of Westfield Boulevard on the west, and the southern curb of Meridian Lane on the east.

A

MAP 1

North Meridian Street Historic District
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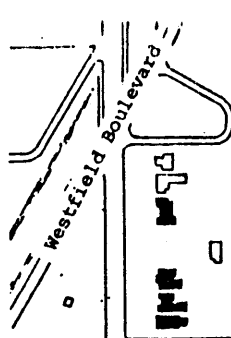


Photo #5 (Streetscape)

Photo #4 (Streetscape)



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Photo #7

57th Street

Photo #6

Photo #25

56th Street

Photo #23

Photo #15

55th Street

Photo #39

Photo #29

54th Street Photo #3 (Streetscape)

Photo #17

Photo #12

52nd Street

Photo #26

Photo #14

Photo #32

Photo #10

Photo #11

Photo #16

Photo #24

49th Street



SEE SECTION B

B

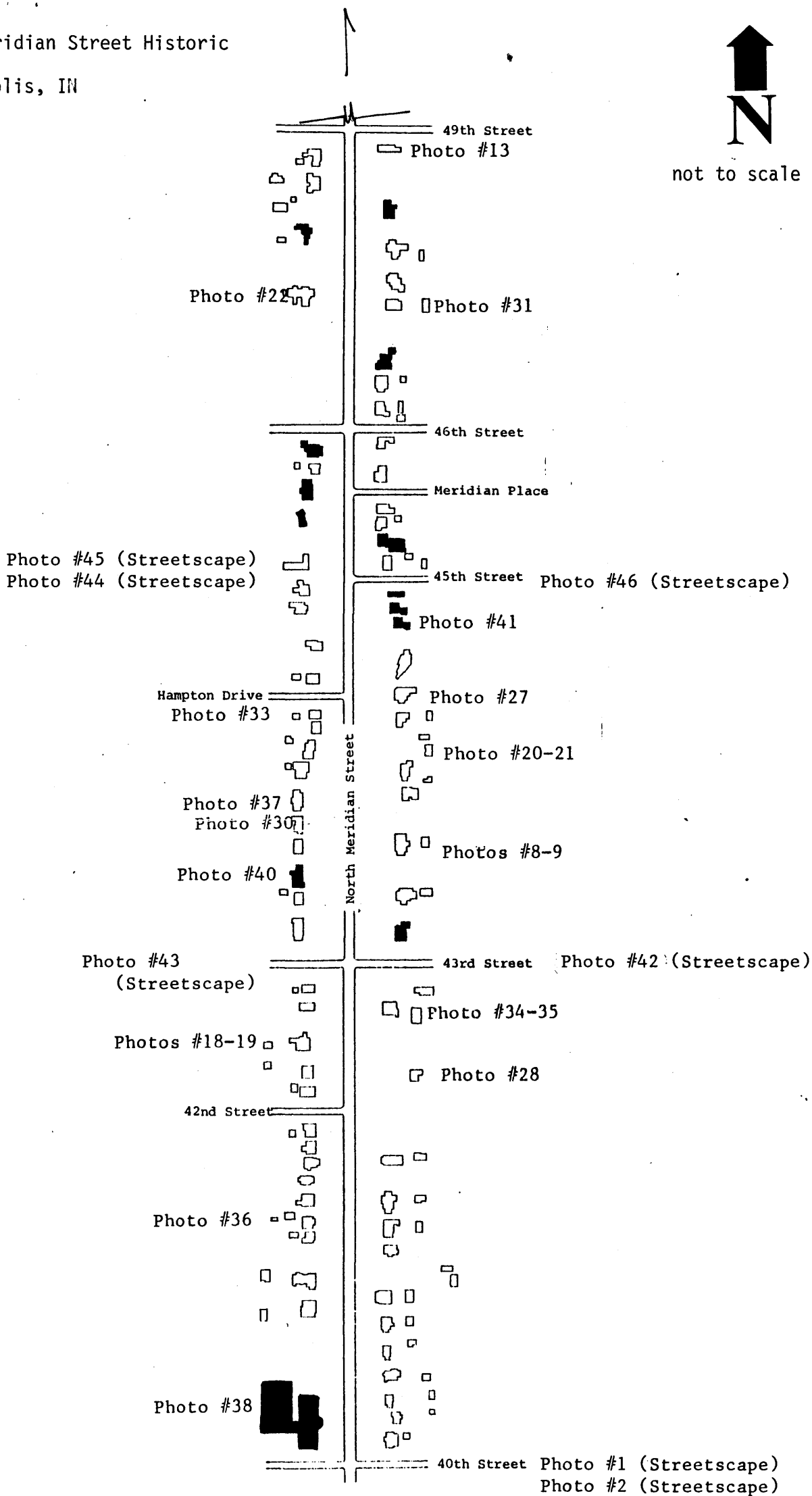
MAP 1

SEE SECTION A

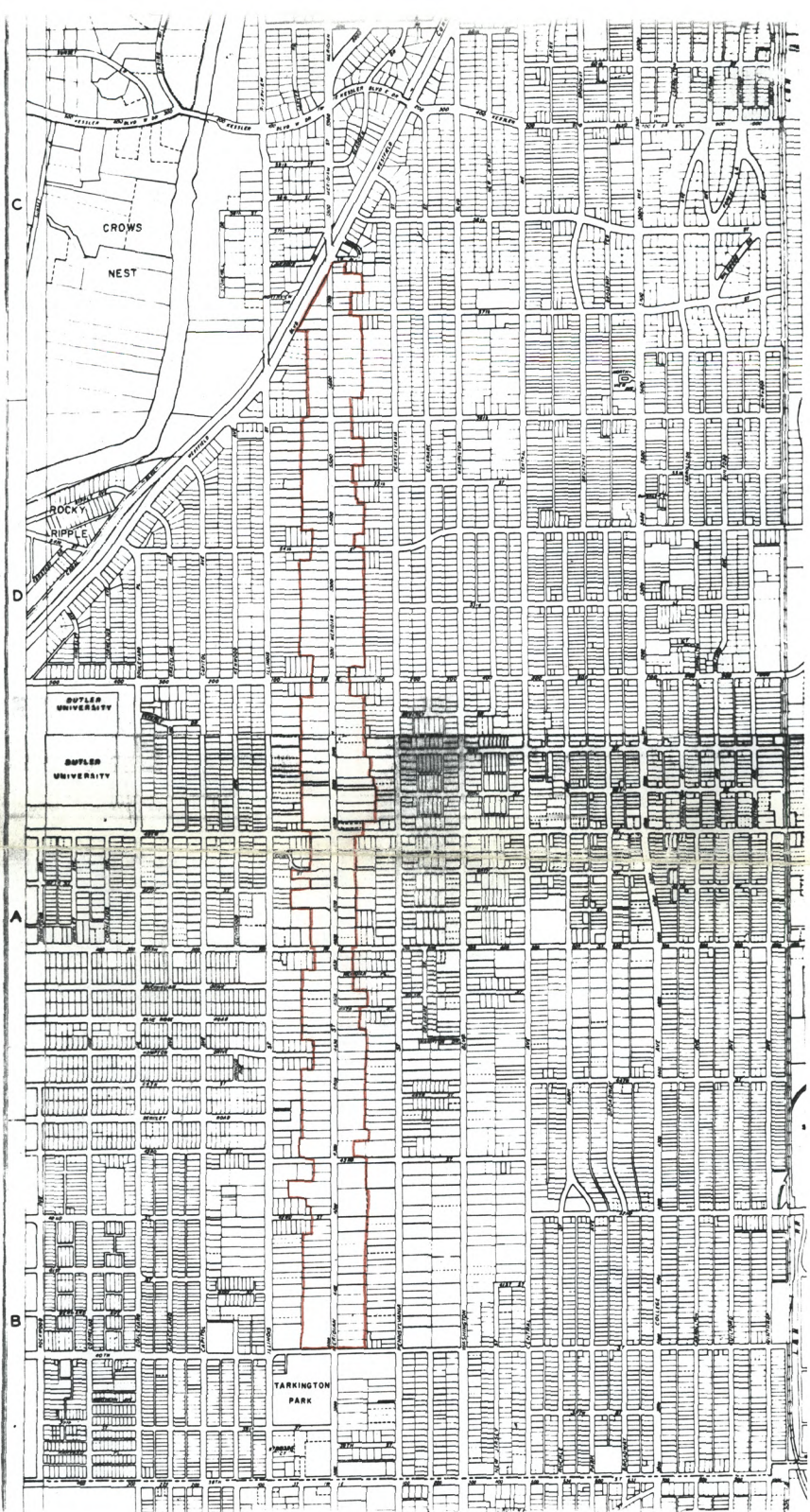
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MAP 2
North Meridian Street Historic District
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