MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION
NEWSLETTER
www.meridianstreetfoundation.org
SPRING 2005

PARTING THOUGHTS

REID WILLIAMSON, President Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana

In residential historic preservation, some cities are lucky enough to have a "crown jewel"—a neighborhood or significant structure that has withstood the test of time.

North Meridian Street can rightfully claim the title of the "crown jewel" of residential historic preservation in Indianapolis—not just one home worthy of distinction, but 173 homes worthy of local and national recognition. North Meridian Street residents' diligent efforts, in addition to a productive partnership with Historic Landmarks Foundation, has led to the preservation of what in the words of critic Grady Clay ranks as "One of America's great streets."

1n 1985, recognizing its architectural and historical significance, Historic Landmarks Foundation prepared a nomination for North Meridian Street to achieve status as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places. In compiling and submitting the application, Historic Landmarks staff worked in conjunction with a number of North Meridian Street residents who collaborated in pursuing protection and recognition for the neighborhood. In September 1986, Historic Landmarks and the residents of North Meridian Street received the news we'd been waiting to hear—the North Meridian Street Historic District gained official landmark status.

In the mid-1980s Historic Landmarks and historians at IUPUI began researching the history of North Meridian Street for publication in a book. To raise funds for the publication of the book, Historic Landmarks offered "Meridian in Bloom" Home and Garden Tours during the summer from 1986 to 1992. During the tours guests were invited into the private residences of North Meridian Street to enjoy the well-preserved architectural elements and charming beauty of the homes. In reflecting back on the massive organization and coordination the tours required, Tina Connor of Historic Landmarks remembers the home of Stan and Barbara Markuson at 4621 North Meridian Street. "That was our command post," said Tina, referring to the home now owned by the Oesterles. A steering committee of residents was organized and consisted of Alice Ross, Keith Norwalk, Barbara Velonis, Stan Markuson, and Linda Sue Gilman. Of the 173 households located on the street, over half participated through committees, patron's parties, or by opening their home for one of the tours.

In the fall of 1992, Historic Landmarks published *The Main Stem: The History and Architecture of North Meridian Street* with text by historians affiliated with POLIS (the Center for the Study of Indianapolis at IUPUI) and photographs by Historic Landmarks' Marsh Davis. Long since out of print, this 150-page "coffee-table" book highlights the social and architectural history of the North Meridian Street Historic District from 40th Street to Westfield Boulevard. The book makes use of interior and exterior photos, architect's drawings, and interviews of past and present residents to tell the story of the street—its development from the earliest days, the architecture, and the people who built and lived in its grand houses. Once again, residents such as Alice Ross, Stan Markuson, Amy MacDonell, John Walsh, and James Roudebush, played an important role in assisting Historic Landmarks by participating on the Meridian Street Book Committee. Other residents provided additional research materials, such as personal pictures, letters, and memorabilia relating to life on North Meridian Street.

Continued on Page 2

BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Your beautification committee of the Meridian Street Foundation is making a major effort to convince the City of Indianapolis to replace our sidewalks. Our sidewalks have not been replaced in at least 30 years, maybe longer. I hope you are saying to yourself "how can I help?" It's your lucky day! You can help with very little effort.

As you take walks this spring write down the address of any sidewalks you find in disrepair. Email this information to me at sharp2577@aol.com and my committee will do the rest.

Let's make our sidewalks safe and beautiful.

Alice Berger
Beautification

MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Neighbors,

As I write this, it is a gorgeous spring day, and the "River of Flowers" is in full bloom on Meridian. It makes me smile to think of the many autumn days over the past three years that were spent with neighbors and friends planting hundreds of thousands of "Glory of the Snow" bulbs.

What a pleasure it is to walk in the neighborhood, admiring the landscapes and appreciating the architectural details of the different homes! It is great to see the children out playing. It is also the time of year that a lot of clean up and repair needs to occur. As you are out walking (or playing!) please help out by picking up trash. It also might be a good idea to offer to assist senior citizen neighbors with lawn clean up. Let's all continue to make our neighborhood beautiful. Kudos to all for keeping contractor signs out of your yards as requested!

It has been a busy first quarter with many positive happenings on our street. Mike Quinn, with the help of the MSF Social Committee, hosted a fabulous, well-attended wine-tasting party on February 26. The Easter Egg Hunt at Klein's was also a huge success. The Alice Carter Park project, chaired by Brent Harvey, has gained momentum in recent weeks. The project team will be starting a design/fund raising stage over the months to come. The Governor's Residence, with leadership from neighbor Bill Oesterle, will be thoroughly renovated and redecorated in the coming year. The residence will be the 2006 St. Margaret's Guild Decorator Showhouse.

Thanks to Peggy Sabens, our MSF Newsletter editor, for continuing the fine job. This edition is the first one to include advertising, thanks to Peggy's efforts. We are thrilled to have high quality advertising sponsors, and we encourage you to thank these businesses personally.

April marks the retirement of J. Reid Williamson, local historic preservation "legend" and president of Historic Landmarks Foundation. Our entire neighborhood is extremely indebted to Mr. Williamson for his leadership and continuous support of our neighborhood. We wish him the very best!

Gratitude to those who have helped sustain our historic neighborhood brings to mind the importance of continuing the tradition. Please remember that changes to homes in our historic neighborhood are required to be in keeping with historic preservation law. You *must* have approval (a Certificate of Appropriateness) to get a permit to make exterior changes to your homes. To better understand the application process, please contact the Meridian Street Land Use committee chairmen, Cindy Zweber Free or Erick Ponader, to find out how to proceed to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Your neighbors in MSF's Land Use committee have an informal group that can better prepare you for the Meridian Street Preservation Commission hearing. *Please use this resource!*

Neighbors new and old, please consider this: The historic preservation of our neighborhood requires a *mindset*. It requires sacrifice of individual desires for the greater good. It is true that making changes to your home is not always a positive thing. If you are convinced that changes must be made, you will have to find ways to adapt your house in such a way that the historic integrity of the Meridian corridor is not compromised. For example, changes in roofline, chimneys, window placement, and the addition of high fences are among items that will never be approved by the commission. To better understand the law before making plans to renovate, check with our website **www.meridianstreetfoundation.org**. Please be realistic and allow enough time for planning changes to your home. At an absolute minimum it will take a month to get the approval, and often it takes longer.

Finally, we are always looking for neighborhood volunteers. If you have interest in serving on the MSF board next year, starting in October, please contact me (283-5322) or Elaine Klein (283-1835).

Have a wonderful summer. I hope to see you all at the MSF picnic!

Kathy Shorter

Open Saturdays

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Parting Thoughts, continued

From National Register status, to the "Meridian in Bloom" tours, to the book *The Main Stem*, Historic Landmarks sought to recognize Meridian Street as one of the premiere residential historic districts in the state, if not the nation. In every one of these efforts the residents of North Meridian Street have been right by our side offering their time, ideas, and hard work. The partnership between the residents of North Meridian Street and Historic Landmarks is a shining example of what can be accomplished when preservationists and private citizens work together to safeguard the historical and architectural integrity of a community. In looking back at what we accomplished, I am confident that our collective, collaborative efforts will go a long way in preserving and protecting North Meridian Street for the generations of Hoosiers who will have the good fortune to call it home, as well as the rest or our citizenry who admire it in passing and show it off to visitors as a crown jewel of our city.

Author's note: I am retiring after 31 years as President of Historic Landmarks in order to spend more time with my seven grandchildren in Hilton Head and Savannah. I leave the preservation of Meridian Street and other Hoosier landmarks in the capable hands of Historic Landmarks' incomparable staff. I am grateful to my Administrative Assistant Kelly Siegert for her collaboration on this article. Thanks and best wishes to all stewards of Meridian Street homes, past, present, and future.

THE FIRST LADY OF INDIANA

Who would've thought a girl from a middle class family in New Albany would become the First Lady of Indiana? Certainly not me! I have always felt that my most important role in life was and is being the mother to my four daughters and I was very content to remain on the home front and out of the public eye. But, life isn't always as we expect it to be and when Mitch was approached by many Hoosiers to run for Governor our private life became very public. While the State of Indiana is undergoing changes and exciting new possibilities, so am I. I look forward to representing our State and my fellow Hoosiers. It is a new beginning for Indiana and a new chapter in my life.

One of my goals is to create a statewide awareness of women's heart health. Most people don't realize that heart disease is the number one killer of women, much more than breast cancer. Many heart hospitals are opening all over our State, and many offer free screenings from time to time. It is my hope that Hoosier women will take advantage of these screenings and make their heart health a priority. Even though the Governor's Residence will be undergoing some major repairs and sprucing up, using NO taxpayers' money, (you know Mitch), I encourage all Hoosiers to tour the Governor's Residence. We offer free tours every Tuesday for individuals and groups. Please call to schedule yours today.

Did you know that your office, club, business or organization can use the conference room at the Residence for your business meetings, luncheons, dinners or receptions? I welcome you to use the Residence, which belongs to all Hoosiers, for these occasions. In our first month in office we have had at least one event at the Residence every week. Please call our office for details at 317-931-3076.

This is a great time to be a Hoosier. Let's all work together to make our State the best it can be. Be proud. Be Hoosier.

Sincerely,
Cheri Daniels

NEWS FROM THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

SHEILA P. LITTLE

Three Facts

Fact #1 The most famous committee for public safety was the **Comite De Salut Public**, which was the French political body of the French Revolution. This committee gained virtual dictatorial control over France during the Reign of Terror (September 1793 to July 1794). The Committee of Public Safety was set up during a time of crises and initially sought to preserve the reforms of the French Revolution.

Fact #2 Our MSF Public Safety Committee, although not as famous yet, attempts to raise issues of safety for the community. We have initiated participation of neighbors in a Neighborhood CrimeWatch throughout seven zones from 40th Street to Westfield Boulevard and Illinois Street to Pennsylvania Street. According to the Indianapolis Police Department, a zone or block is considered "ACTIVE" once all of the following have been completed: (1) Meeting with the CrimeWatch Coordinator, (2) Meeting with a Crime Prevention Officer, and (3) A membership roster is submitted to the CrimeWatch Office. We have achieved this status and IPD has posted several CrimeWatch signs in our area. To remain an "ACTIVE" zone or block, each group must meet at least once a year and submit an updated member roster.

Fact #3 This summer on **Saturday, August 13, 2005**, the MSF will hold multiple block parties, sponsored by our social committee, in all zones and an officer from the CrimeWatch may attend to give an update on public safety in our area.

THE NEW RIVI-ERA?

The New Rivi Era?
Are witnessing the birth of the new Rivi era! Are we in the midst of a little miracle? We think so!

Here is what is happening this spring! We have completed a nationwide search for a professional General Manager. We are truly excited to report that, effective April 4th, we have hired Greg Sabens who has had a successful and impressive 20 year career managing some very exclusive clubs around the nation! Construction has started on four new tennis courts on the North side of the property. Over 1400 households representing 3000+ members have pledged their commitment to the Rivi totaling over $400,000 in assessments collected. We have a new web site:www.therivi.org. A major grounds clean up and beautification project has begun. Repairs are being made to the diving tank and outdoor pool. The pool will open as scheduled on May 28.In our last article we invited you to join us. Please stop in for a visit with Greg and get a sense of our exciting future! We are glad to say that this are asking you to join us now whether out of desire to use the facilities or to simply offer financial support for our efforts because a strong membership roster will hasten our ability to effectively tackle capital improvements and ensure this historic neighborhood asset will have a bright and strong and lasting future. Contact us at 255-5471

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AROUND THE CORNER...

DICK PICCOLO

Jon Van Till is a Rutgers University Professor who refers to his PECTS schema as a way of categorizing the workings of social organizations to solve four basic problems if they are to thrive, or even survive. The problems, of setting goals, attracting resources, sharing meaning and sticking together, when addressed within the framework of the PECTS schema, remind us that organizations and institutions are always in interaction with each other, and that transactions and events continually flow between one sector and another.

Under the PECTS schema "P" is for Politics. "E" is for the Economy. "C" is the Culture, and "TS" is the Third Sector — normally nonprofit organizations (such as The Meridian Street Foundation) where, as Van Till points out, fellowship and common cause is created by the *joining with others* in voluntary association.

In addition to our members on Meridian Street, the "others" referred to are well represented by our members within the remainder of our Historic District, as well as our the Neighborhood Associations at our boundaries. However, the key to developing and improving our neighborhood assets, whether our homes or our intangible assets of knowledge and skills as well as the social capital we may have, is to combine, and align, our efforts with those of our neighbors. In this way we can multiply our power and our effectiveness in addressing our concerns — whether historic preservation, traffic and safety, crime, neighborhood improvement projects such as sidewalks and streets, etc.

There have been instances where one individual has made a difference in the way things have turned out for our neighborhood. However, it is often the organization that provides the medium of production for the accomplishment of major undertakings within its boundaries. And those undertakings are becoming increasingly difficult in light of our current "P" & "E" climate.

Our goal should be to gain a better understanding of the needs of the individuals within our neighborhood, as well as the needs and social and economic purposes of the Neighborhood Associations at our boundaries. The development of better networks of civic participation can become astonishingly deep and enable us to amass a rigorous discipline of social interaction to better accomplish all of the things that need to be done — within the Historic District, "…and the neighborhood in which it lies."

AROUND THE BLOCK

We welcome our new neighbors, including Allen and Vivian Phelps, who are renovating a home and will be moving into after the improvements are completed; and Dwayne Kniola and Kim Kelly. Melissa and Dan Daum, longtime Meridian Street residents, have moved from one house to another (where they are only the second owners), and are in the midst of a major landscaping renovation.

Elizabeth Barden, mother of a toddler and wife of author Dan Barden, opened Big Hat Books in Broad Ripple last fall and is finding her shop to be a hub of activity. To our knowledge, Big Hat Books is the only general interest, independent bookstore in the city!

We extend our congratulations to Peggy and Jim Sabens, who celebrated their 50th anniversary earlier this year in California.

Graham Hale, a seventh grader from St. Richard's School and son of Catey and Doug Hale, was chosen to attend the Junior National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C., during which youngsters learned more about the attributes of leadership. As part of the Second Presbyterian Chamber Choir, Alexandra Hale, a fifth grader at St. Richard's, and Margaret Ponader, a freshman at Park Tudor and daughter of Wendy and Erick Ponader, sang at Carnegie Hall on January 17. Kathryn Crabb, a sophomore at Park Tudor and daughter of Ellen and David Crabb, received second place in vocal competition of the Prelude Awards, which are sponsored by the Children's Museum.

Chris and Ann Stack's son, Chris, has just been accepted into the Actors Studio in New York, one of the most prestigious workshops in the nation for actors, directors, and playwrights. Chris has appeared in a variety of television shows and theater productions, including the last two episodes of "Third Watch," which aired at the end April.

Condolences go to Philip Cox, whose father, Hurbert Cox, of Poseyville, Indiana, passed away in March, and to Denise Cordingley, whose mother and father passed away in March. Denise's mother, Odette Karnowsky, could be considered an honorary member of the MSF because this lovely lady touched the lives of so many families in the neighborhood. Condolences also go to Melissa Daum, whose mother died in April.

NEW MSF BOARD MEMBERS

New MSF Board Members Beth Deane, Mike Quinn and Ann Rich.

ALICE CARTER PARK UPDATE

BRENT HARVEY

The committee is diligently trying to enhance the design for the new park. We had a very exciting meeting with the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at Ball State University. The College has previously partnered with Indy Parks on several projects as well as with other local clients. The park design could potentially become a class project. They have a very structured program to facilitate the process that includes meeting with the stakeholders to understand design criteria such as "fit" with the environment, functionality requirements, and other input from the public. It would be a win for the students to get practical experience and a win for the City to receive creative design options. Ultimately, we envision a magnificent gateway to the City that celebrates the wonderful historical and architectural aspects of the neighborhood.

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LAND USE COMMITTEE

Greetings from the Land Use Committee. We are working diligently to preserve the value of our homes and integrity of our neighborhood and look forward to any thoughts or comments you may have. Simply send Cindy or Erick an e-mail at their addresses set forth in this newsletter.

Several exciting things are happening in connection with the Land Use Committee. First, and perhaps most important, all of the resources you need to file an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness are now available on the Meridian Street Foundation website www.meridianstreetfoundation.org. In addition to an application packet, you will find links to the Indiana law governing our historical community and the Meridian Street Guidelines which will guide you and your contractor in making design and construction decisions about your home. We strongly urge you to review those guidelines before submitting an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Second, the Land Use Committee, together with the Membership Committee, is preparing "Welcome Packets" for all households in the Meridian Street Preservation District. The purpose of the packet is to introduce, or reintroduce, our neighbors to the Meridian Street Foundation and explain to them the laws and rules that govern exterior alterations in our neighborhood. We have all heard of neighbors who have said "I didn't know I had to get approval first" after they receive a letter questioning their construction. Our goal is to prevent this confusion and educate all of our neighbors. With this packet and communication from you and the Meridian Street Foundation, we hope to accomplish this.

One final thought. As most of you know, the Meridian Street Preservation Commission, the nine member group appointed by the Mayor and Governor, is responsible for reviewing requests for Certificates of Appropriateness. That Commission, by law, includes an architect and an individual with demonstrated knowledge of historic preservation whose job is to ensure that exterior improvements are consistent with the historical integrity of our neighborhood. We, the Land Use Committee of the Meridian Street Foundation, are a group of interested neighbors who want to help our fellow neighbors in preparing a request to the Commission. We are not obstructionists — quite the contrary. We want to see improvements made to the homes in our neighborhood. We understand that modern life often requires changes. Our belief and experience are generally that those changes can be accomplished in a manner consistent with the street's historic heritage. Sure, there will be compromises, but without the law, our neighborhood (and real estate values) clearly would suffer. A quick look south of 38th Street confirms this.

Again, please e-mail Cindy or Erick with your thoughts and comments. We look forward to hearing from you.

Cindy Zweber-Free: czwebfree@aol.com
Erick Ponader:
eponader@sommerbarnard.com

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MINDSET

Hello, I am your soon to be new neighbor at 5655 N. Meridian St. I was asked to write an article regarding our home, experiences, and renovation plans. My husband, Kevin & I are excited to finally be moving toward our goal which is to improve this home's curb appeal, bring back its original features, and make it more practical for living today.

Kevin & I have been living comfortably in a darling Cape Cod in Arden Neighborhood for the past 4 ? years. However, we have always loved the Meridian Street area and knew that we would eventually like to invest in a larger home and expand our family. We literally fell in love with this property at 5655 N. Meridian. We weren't sure about the curb appeal or color of the brick, but knew we loved the bones and layout of the house. We actually kept trying to talk each other out of the house, and then back into the house. For a few months, we would both wake up in the morning, look at one another & say, "I dreamed about the house…." Finally, we talked it over with our realtor, contractors, etc. and found out it probably would not be that difficult to change a few things on the house, especially the way we wanted to change it. So we went for it.

I had not been previously exposed to the historic preservation process, but was enthusiastic about it. I had read over the MSPC Guidelines prior to our closing of the home. We thought we had an understanding of what we needed to do, but needed to get on it right away if we wanted to be in by Christmas. This actually was quite difficult since the next meeting's information had to be in within two days. Our mindset was that we wanted to improve this home's curb appeal, bring it back to its original state, but change a few things so that it functioned more practically and it could be our own. Many changes had been made to the home over time that were not necessarily appropriate for the fabric of the neighborhood, but were assumed done before the formal creation of the MSPC.

Nonetheless, I plugged on and worked tirelessly trying to find original 1938 pictures of the home. I contacted and/or researched the Indianapolis Historical Society (books, microfilm), Historic Landmarks, Main Stem, newspaper articles, ancestry.com, etc. I tried to find documentation of the oil pumping directly into the basement of the home during the 60's or 70's-no luck. Our goal had not changed. We just had to have someone explain it in the proper terms and describe what we were going to do using the proper architectural language. We learned this during many passionate discussions with the commission. Finally, we hired an architect to help us share our intentions for the home. He was able to better see the things that weren't original & get an idea of what actually was original. He explained it to the commission and it was as if we all finally spoke the same language. We had also changed our mindset about some of our plans & had adjusted them to be more appropriate.

The overhangs, the shutters, the windows, the front doors, the driveway in the back, all were probably not original. The garage in the back will be enclosed for added living space and covered with a slate roof to match the existing home. In addition, a three-car detached garage will be built to match the existing home in the rear side yard. The driveway will become more user friendly with a small turn around in the front. This will eliminate the access of deliveries into our private space in the back of the house, and prevent people from backing onto Meridian Street, which is extremely dangerous. We plan to have the brick, limestone, & wrought iron around the patio cleaned and restored with landscaping to follow.

While this time consuming process occasionally seemed tedious and difficult, it was well worth the effort. Our recommendation: *take the emotion out and don't have your MIND SET on any one item.* Thank you to each of the members of the MSPC, the Land Use Committee, Ruth Vignati, Gardens of Growth, Dave Gibson, and Brian Pozen for your assistance and guidance through this process.

Kevin and I hope to be moved in before our baby is due in August and we look forward to meeting all of our new neighbors.

Stacey McCarthy
Note: Even before moving in, Stacey McCarthy is serving on the Alice Carter Park Committee.

Neighbor Spotlight

Brent Harvey

Brent grew up in Columbus Indiana where he developed an appreciation for architecture. He and his wife Gwen moved to the neighborhood seven years ago. Since then they've had two daughters and are expecting baby #3 in the Fall. He works in finance at Eli Lilly and Company and she is a full-time mom. In addition to the MSF, he is actively involved with Penrod and his fraternity at Purdue. Brent is chairman of the MSF Alice Carter Park Committee.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Meridian Street Foundation News & Views published three times a year is the communication arm of the Meridian Street Foundation, a 501C3 not for profit neighborhood association. We welcome comments and ideas from our neighbors. Our main thrust is to reinforce the idea that while a certain degree of discipline and commitment is necessary to live in a unique and significant neighborhood, the rewards far outweigh any disadvantages.

Peggy Sabens ph. 257-3741, fax 475-0224, email jmsabens@indy.net
Kathy Shorter
Vaughn Hickman
Also Rome Nkosi, email rnkosi@aol.com attn: MSF

we will gladly accept letters or comments for inclusion in upcoming issues.

ALICE IN MERIDIAN LAND

ALICE BERGER | 283.2453

The other day when I was walking my Scottie dogs on Meridian, I wondered what it was like when this community was new. You know, back in the 1920's and 30's, the era the *Main Stem* called the golden age of Meridian Street, a time when many residents were listed in the *Blue Book*, the social register of the city's rich and famous.

Imagine saying hello and having a little chat with Booth Tarkington, 4270 N. Meridian (winner of the Pulitzer Prize for The Magnificent Ambersons and Alice Adams) or Kin Hubbard, 5437 N. Meridian (creator of the famous Abe Martin cartoon). Imagine saying good morning to David Chambers who lived at 5272. His publishing firm published the work of James Whitcomb Riley and Johnny Gruelle, the creator of Raggedy Ann.

What would it be like to have a 500 Race party with a guest list that included: Joseph Cole, Jr., 4909 N. Meridian (Cole Auto); Stutz Auto president, William Thompson, 4343 N. Meridian; Harold Ames, president of the Duesenberg Auto Corporation, 4544 N. Meridian? The guest of honor could be Arthur Newby, 4020 N. Meridian (demolished), one of the founders of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. That would be a fun party!

When you stop and think about it, Meridian Street really hasn't changed — only the people, the way they dress, the cars they drive and the things they do. We can all feel a sense of pride that we are an integral part of the evolvement of this one-of-a-kind historic area, including Meridian Kessler and Butler Tarkington, and that hopefully those who inhabit these great homes in the future will feel the same.

Former President Harry S. Truman at the Frank McKinney home, 4906 North Meridian Street. Photo courtesy of former 4906 neighbors and residents Mike and Karen Gardiner.

NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT ON OUR MERIDIAN HOME

JULIE O'BRIEN

Major home renovation has it's rewards, but one reward that doesn't usually come to mind is having your finished product filmed for use on a national home design television show. This is what happened to us, and while I'm actually rather used to having homes that I've designed appear on television and in national magazines, I'm an interior designer by profession, I was not so prepared to be the focus of a show about my own home. Fortunately, I had an accomplice, my husband David Stahl. This helped buffer the situation for me, but there was still a little trauma involved.

To bring our epic to the present one would need to understand how we came to be renovators. We purchased our Meridian Street home in September of 2001. This, of course, was a pretty grim time in our country. Our Meridian Kessler home that we had been living in for years refused to be sold. We felt it would be better to stay put and keep trying to sell it, which gave us lots of time to ponder the Meridian Street home. Our new purchase could be defined as our dream home. It is Spanish Colonial in design with Italian details, (much like homes along the Italian Riviera.) The first time we saw it we knew it was ours. Everything about it felt like us. In fact, I went home and dug out of my files a model of a home I had designed years before in design school. The task was to select a style of home that spoke to you the most and design it with your own personal slant applied. There it was still intact, a crisp white model with all the details inked in black, a perfect Spanish Colonial example. We felt we had finally come home. However, with so much time to wait to move, we could examine closely what it would be like to live there. Spanish Colonials all have one characteristic in common and that is that they are U-shaped with either an interior or exterior hallway running along the inside of the U, and U surrounds an exterior courtyard. Thus, we too have these features, however, a negative aspect of this is that often, the rooms line up along the corridor much like boxes with only the corridor and courtyard to link the spaces. This problem is what we wanted to correct. It seemed that by removing walls along the dining room and kitchen corridor, we would open up rooms to each other, the corridor and the courtyard. This construction would also force us to take a close look at electrical and lighting issues, and make a new kitchen necessary. But the changes were absolutely worth any trouble and expense.

Renovating historic homes is a very delicate proposition. It is so important to maintain the integrity and quality of the style of the home. This was critical to us. So we proceeded gingerly, tearing out walls, repairing plaster (and in some cases reinstalling plaster that had been replaced.) Stone columns matching others in the home were added to help define an entry into the dining room, lighting that enhanced architectural features was added, as was decorative lighting to replace original lighting taken from the home. Details original to the house were saved and reinstalled while a new kitchen repeated the feel of the Italian wood moulding in the home.

We started the renovation while waiting to move and after moving we slowed the process down (as living in it was getting in the way.) No stone was left unturned on the first floor where plaster, paint, electrical, floors, etc. were all enhanced. In the meantime, "Homes Across America", H.G.T.V's feature show on distinctive homes around the country, had been contacting me to show homes of my clients. In January of 2004 they called to let me know that they would like to feature a couple of my homes, and while they were here filming, they would like to film mine too. I worked on every possible excuse for them not to do that, but they had a film crew coming and they wanted my help. So, we became reluctant and momentary TV stars.

The paint was still drying when the crew pulled into the drive on April 24, 2004. It was a fun but stressful day where our nonexistent stage skills were pushed to their outer limits of uselessness. Fortunately, the crew was fun, loved Patachou, and were great editors. So when the finished version aired in November of 2004, we felt pleased. It was especially fun to us that they chose to film all along Meridian Street, even filming the sign markers that indicate the historic district.

We felt pleased to be a part of such a special neighborhood and to see that others around the country were going to be aware of it too. The episode runs periodically and upcoming air dates can be found by checking the H.G.T.V. website.

THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF NEWPORT COUNTY, RHODE ISLAND

ANDREA CARNEIRO, Communications Chairperson, Newport Preservation Society

When a dedicated and concerned group of Newport, Rhode Island residents banded together in 1945 to purchase an old Colonial house along the city's waterfront to save it from demolition, it's unlikely that they realized they were creating an organization that just a few decades later would be recognized internationally as the steward of one of the finest collections of architecturally and socially significant houses in America.

In 2005, The Preservation Society of Newport County is celebrating its 60th anniversary with an extensive calendar of special events and tours at its historic properties, which span 250 years of American architectural and social history

Sixty years after founder Katherine Warren and others got together to preserve a small piece of Newport's history, the 1748 Hunter House, the Preservation Society is an internationally-recognized source for scholars and students of American architecture and history, a major contributor to the economic vitality of Rhode Island, and a world-renowned visitor destination. The Society is accredited by the American Association of Museums. It maintains ten historic properties and a total of 33 buildings on 80 acres of gardens and parks, five of which are National Historic Landmarks.

In tiny Newport, Rhode Island, the leading architects of the 19th and early 20th centuries built magnificent "summer cottages" for the nation's social and financial elite. These mansions provided the backdrop for a society centered on sport, fashion and parties in settings of spectacular natural beauty. Many of these architecturally and socially significant houses have been preserved by the Preservation Society of Newport County.

The Preservation Society's collection includes Hunter House (1748), an outstanding example of Georgian colonial architecture; Kingscote (1841), a Gothic Revival cottage built originally for a Southern plantation owner; Chateau-sur-Mer (1852), the grand Victorian of a China Trade merchant; Chepstow (1860) a charming Italianate-style cottage; Green Animals Topiary Garden (1860), one of the oldest topiary gardens in North America; Isaac Bell House (1883), one of the finest examples of shingle-style architecture in America; Marble House (1892), built and furnished at a reported cost of $11 million; The Breakers (1895), the 70-room palazzo built for Cornelius Vanderbilt II, head of one of America's richest families; The Elms (1901), a French-style chateau built by a Philadelphia coal magnate; and Rosecliff (1902), which was the site of many of the grandest parties of the Gilded Age, and has been the setting for several Hollywood movies.

These properties today are visited by more than 500,000 people annually, making the Newport Mansions, as they are known, one of the leading cultural attractions in New England.

Tours of the Newport Mansions are offered year-round, and include behind-the-scenes tours, audio tours, garden tours and many other specialty offerings. For more information about visiting the Newport Mansions, see our website at www.NewportMansions.org.

AND WE THOUGHT WE HAVE PROBLEMS

Reproduced with the kind permission of the Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, Rhode Island

Preservation: The High Cost of Maintenance
What has 25,000 parts,
Weighs almost 60 tons,
And costs $3.5 million?

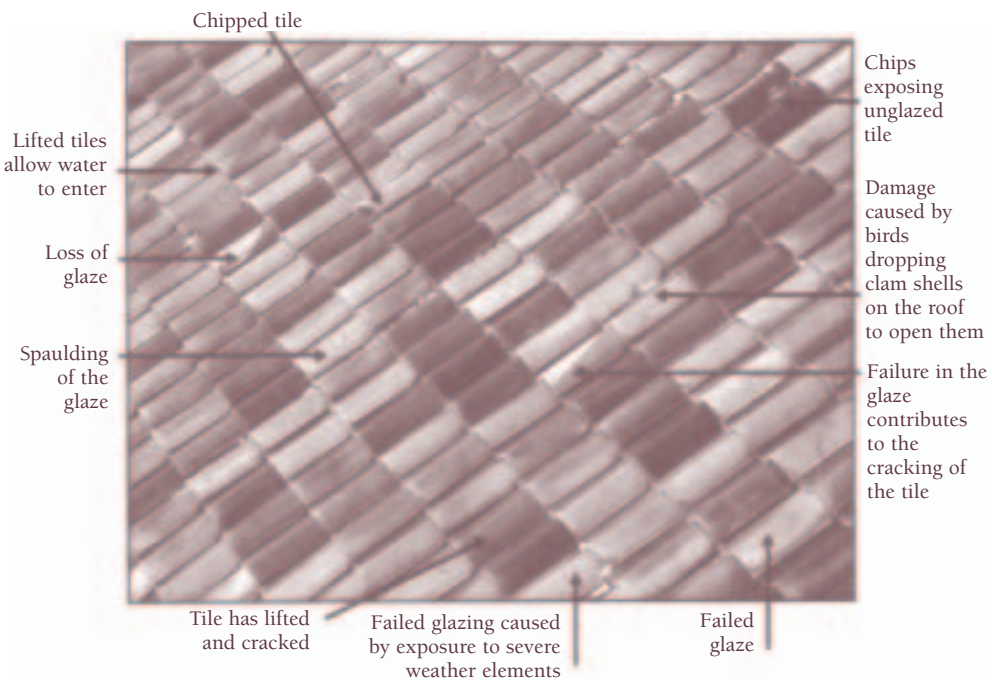
The Breakers' roof, soon to undergo a complete replacement, will be one of the most visible maintenance/ restoration projects ever undertaken by the Preservation Society. But despite its size and visibility, it's just one of dozens of projects underway at Society properties at any given time to try to keep up with, and hopefully ahead of, the erosive effects of Father Time.

"Preservation has its roots in maintenance," said Properties Director Curt Genga. "We're in a critical stage right now." The Society has just completed a major study that maps out in detail some $100 million in maintenance and preservation work that will be needed at it's properties over the next 30 years.

Decades of deferred maintenance have left the Society facing some major financial decisions. Many of the buildings had been severely neglected for years before the Society took possession of them, and it may take another 20 years before all the deferred maintenance can be caught up on.

While the Society's houses face the same maintenance issues as the average family home, they come on a much larger scale. For example, The Elms' drainage system consists of 15 to 20 miles of underground pipes, all of which need to be inspected and cleaned. The inspection is done with a tiny video camera, which can be threaded through pipes to see their condition from the inside. And much like a person's arteries will become blocked from a lifetime of cholesterol-rich food, many of The Elms' pipes— not cleaned for nearly a hundred years — are clogged and cracked and leaking.

Roof Damage at The Breakers
Original 1895 Breakers' Roof Tiles



And of course, the larger scale also comes with a hefty pricetag. Replacement of The Breakers' roof and repair and cleaning of the side walls will cost $3.5 million. Work will soon get underway on a new roof for The Elms, at a cost of $400,000.

Why so expensive? Let's consider The Breakers' roof replacement. There are 25,000 roof tiles, weighing an aggregate 60 tons. Since it was completed in 1895, there have been at least three separate patchwork repairs, so that today's roof is made up of four different eras of tile. In a job that will be spread over several seasons, all 25,000 tiles will be remo0ved; the sub-roof waterproofing replaced; new copper flashing installed at the base of chimneys and around gutters; and all new tiles, manufactured by Ludiwici Roof Tile Inc. of Ohio, installed.

If all goes well, the job will hardly be noticeable when it's completed. "One of the biggest compliments we get is that it doesn't look like we did anything," said Genga.

But that's also part of what makes the job so expensive: the need to replace materials "in Kind" and to leave a building looking the way its original owners intended.

REFLECTIONS ON MERIDIAN STREET...

H. Roll McLaughlin, FAIA, Architect, Chairman Emeritus, HLFI

Reflections of Meridian Street take me back to the late 1920's while living in the 5900 block of North Central Avenue and attending School 84. We had a class in geography and our text, although general in scope, the text did highlighted some of the cities in the United States, including Indianapolis. Along with other points of interest there was reference of Indianapolis as a city of beautiful homes. Meridian Street was singled out referring to the several miles of picturesque domestic architecture uninterrupted by commercialism. Little did I realize that some thirty years ago I would be involved in a nation-wide preservation movement to preserve our architectural and historic heritage and such areas as Meridian Street.

It wasn't until after World War II that we really started to become aware of our architectural heritage aside from buildings of national or regional historical significance. I was fortunate to be among a small group of architects and historians from around the country who helped organize a nation-wide preservation movement. Three national organizations were to spearhead the preservation movement; The National Trust for Historic Preservation, The National Parks Services (Historic American Buildings Survey) and the American Institute of Architects Committee on Historic Resources. Membership in these groups overlapped so we were able to move forward with several significant programs.

Special committees on historic preservation representing a broad spectrum of ability in history, architecture and planning were formed. Carefully and thoroughly this group investigated the extent of and analyzed the nature of America's historic preservation needs. They steeped themselves in the experience of European nations with long precedents in preservation. Their report published under the title "With Heritage So Rich", recommended a broadened federal role in historic preservation. An admonition that the

legislative response was heeded in Public Law 89-665, the National Preservation Act of 1966. As a result, Congress declared that the historical and cultural foundation of the nation should be preserved as a living past of our community life and development.

The National Historic Preservation Act gives legal recognition to the cultural risks inherent in the constant change in modern life. The same dynamic forces that threaten our natural environment also endanger our ties with the past. This act has been the means to protect these ties. The law will not halt progress; it provides instead a list of properties and areas worth saving and assures they will not be destroyed without due process. It requires Americans to take note of their past when planning their future—to pursue and consider whether that which they are about to build is truly a greater work than that which they are about to destroy.

This brings us to the need for consideration of preserving not only individual structures of historic or architectural significance but a comprehensive index of significant physical evidences of our national patrimony including historic districts such as North Meridian Street and adjacent areas.

The importance of North Meridian Street was first triggered by Kurt Pantzer, attorney and resident at 4310 N. Meridian Street. Late in the 1960's, Mr. Pantzer invited me and several others to lunch and to hear his ideas for forming a Meridian Street preservation organization. Resulting was a bill presented to the State Legislature to form the Meridian Street Preservation Commission, but not without heated debate and remonstrators against such proposed restrictions. As might be expected the bill went through the usual committee process and public debate. Nonetheless, the Act was passed in 1971 as Title 925…establishing the Meridian Street Preservation Commission. As one of the original members of the Commission, having served thirty years, I have witnessed the pro's and con's, the do's and the don'ts and sometimes lack of common sense as they apply to guidelines for altering homes and landscape. The Commission has made a significant impact on the area by requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness for building alterations. The result has indeed preserved the integrity of the Meridian Street community.

Interestingly enough, through the vision of Mr. Eli Lilly and others, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana (HLFI) was founded in 1960 even before the National Preservation Act of 1967. Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana is the largest private preservation organization in the country, second only to the National Trust. In its infancy HLFI was operated by its executive committee and board, first with the office in a home, later the Morris-Butler House, then Crown Hill and finally our own building at 340 W. Michigan Street. Following the retirement of our first director, Robert Brown, who served for some ten years, we hired Reid Williamson away from Historic Savannah (Ga). Mr. Williamson has for 32 years served the HLFI bearing his stamp in all aspects of its operation, bringing our membership from 130 members to 1100 and from one office to ten offices in Indiana. All these accomplishments have helped insure that Indiana is on the national forefront of preservation.

Reid retires April 30, 2005, leaving behind an exemplary career and an organization on solid foundations. It has been my pleasure to know and have worked with Reid and as one of those who hired him. I think we did a good job! He will be missed and difficult to replace.

TRASH ISN'T TREASURED

Neighbors, please refrain from putting your trash out earlier than the eve of your weekly pickup date. It is unattractive and can be disturbed by animals or wind and has an unpleasant effect on our neighborhood's appearance. Thank you.

Neighbor Spotlight

Ann Rich

MSF Board Member and Co-Chair, Social Committee

I was born in Mishawaka In, and spent my younger years there ; but moved to Indianapolis in 1964. I have worked with my husband as nurse and administrator for 25 years. This is our second move to Meridian St; returning in Sep 2004. I am very happy to return and be involved again in MSF.

EASTER EGG HUNT 2005

The Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 26, 2005 was a very enjoyable afternoon for all 110 hunters and their parents and grandparents. No one allowed the cool weather of 43 degrees to dampen their fun blowing bubbles, face painting, consuming cookies and lemonade. At least it wasn't raining or worse snowing! The highlight of the day was the Hunt itself. All children enjoyed finding Easter Eggs filled with candy on the lawn of John and Elaine Klein at 4343 North Meridian Street. And, of course, the winners that found the golden eggs enjoyed choosing their favorite prize. All children took home a large sand pail and shovel filled with even more prizes. Thanks to all that help make the afternoon a huge success!

TRAFFIC CALMING

Virginia Handley & Nancy Logan

You may have noticed that during the month of April, police were more active on Friday and Saturday evenings. The Traffic Committee, with the permission of Meridian Street Foundation, hired an off-duty Indianapolis police officer during the hours of 6pm till 10pm, patrolling the area from 40th to Westfield between Illinois & Pennsylvania Streets. During these two weekends, 46 tickets were issued for speeding and 3 for other violations, and on April 9th around 10:30pm the officer was the first on the scene of a bad accident at 46th and Illinois. Safety to drivers and pedestrians is the number one concern of the Traffic Committee, and we hope to implement other measures, that like this one, will help us to improve that safety for all.

The Traffic Committee has asked the city to reduce the speed limit from 40 to 35 mph on Meridian Street between Westfield and 54th street (at the top of the hill). This would result in the speed limit being consistent at 35mph for the entire length of our Historic District. This year, the Decorator's Showhouse is located in the current 40 mph zone, and we have great concerns about speeding traffic during that event.

Did you know that the Indianapolis Power and Light company, on average replaces 24 light poles annually on Meridian Street because of accidents?

Even so, we have not yet been successful in convincing the city to put a stop lights at 43rd & Meridian or 40th & Meridian. Traffic accidents have also knocked over and damaged the Historic Marker. We recently had to pay for the cost of moving it, too. Think of the money insurance companies are paying out each time there is an accident on Meridian or one of the side streets. Hence, all of us pay higher insurance rates.

We are researching other ways to calm the traffic, e.g., paving each intersection with brick from 40th to Westfield. This has proven successful for slowing traffic in many parts of the United States. In addition to slowing the traffic, this surface treatment not only looks attractive, it adds an appropriate historical and pedestrian element to the area. We are searching for different foundations who support work in this area.

MSF SUMMER PICNIC / JUNE 11 (RSVP by June 4)

Spring is upon us and so now is the time to start planning for summer! The Meridian Street Foundation social events committee is excited to announce that our summer picnic and fun fair will be held on the grounds of the Indiana Governors Residence. The event will held on June 11th from 11:30 to 2:30 gather your families and alert your neighbors to assemble with your favorite side dish. The neighborhood will serve Dicks Bodacious Barbeque, hotdogs for kids, drinks, coleslaw, ice cream and setups. The cost for the event will be minimal: $5.00 for individuals and $12.00 for families. This will cover the (graciously discounted) cost of the barbeque and the use of the residence. We ask that neighbors bring their favorite side dish and bring the recipe for use in a future MSF cook book!

Games will be available for the young and young at heart. Prizes donated from local merchants will be provided. Tours of the Governors Residence will be provided that afternoon as well. Our man Mitch and family has been invited. I personally would love to see our governor in a potato sack race!!!!

This will be a great opportunity to meet your neighbors and build new memories for your children.

Use the following as a guide on what to bring:
Residents with last name ending in:

A-E . . . .BRING A SIDE DISH
F-J . . . . .BRING A DESERT
K-P . . . .BRING A SALAD
Q-T . . . .BRING A VEGETABLE
U-Z . . . .BRING WHAT EVER SUITS YOU!

Food will be ordered from Dicks Bodacious Barbeque based on reservations received. If you plan to attend please be courteous and RSVP by June 4th.

For reservations please use the attached coupon and send your check to:

Meridian Street Summer Picnic

$5.00 for individuals and $12.00 for families

Number of Adults _____ Number of Children _____ Amount enclosed $ _____

Please return by June 4th to:

Ann Rich

5617 North Meridian Street, Indianapolis IN 46208 Ph.: 253-7712

How can we live without our lives? How will we know it's us without our past?

John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

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WINE TASTING

MICHAEL QUINN

The first event of the Meridian Street Foundation social season was a smashing success. The wine tasting and art exhibit held on February 26th drew 75 neighbors and even several local elected officials. Representatives David Orentlicher and Cindy Noe attended to add a bit of politics mix! It was very gracious of them to take time out of their busy schedules to spend time with us. In these tumultuous economic times, it is nice to have the opportunity to have face time with your representatives!

Host Mike Quinn with wine maven Dina Avogustis of National Wine and Spirits.

Our guest list ranged from some of the oldest Meridian Street Foundation residents to our newest. The crowd mixed and mingled and new friendships formed. Neighbors that lived doors away from each other for years finally got acquainted. History was shared and rumors dispelled. Guests feasted on an elaborate layout of fruits, cheeses, crackers. The anonymous caterer also provided us with a fine selection of desserts, courtesy of Illinois Street Food Emporium. The art on display from Lucas Gallery gave the guests an opportunity to see what is available right around the corner. (49th and Pennsylvania to be exact)

With the scent of wine and the echo of conversation coming from the lower level, neighbors were drawn down the stairs to sample the selection of wines. All attendees were provided with a custom designed MSF wine glass. This take home token definitely served its purpose.

Our gracious wine connoisseur Dina Avogustis with National Wine and Spirits educated us on the art of selecting a new wine. Dina had a selection of 10 wines that ranged in variety and price. She educated people on how to select the perfect wine for an event. She helped people to understand what they personally enjoy in a wine. She helped people to understand that purchasing a wine does not have to be intimidating. She stated that going to a retailer that specializes in wines is a great start. Just ask what they recommend. Tell them what you are looking for and what your price range is and they will steer you to the perfect selection. Keep a journal of wines you enjoy. This way you will have a source to reference when the need arises to purchase again. Selecting a bottle of wine can a daunting task. With thousands of choices at your fingertips, a wine tasting offers you the opportunity to better understand your personal likes and dislikes are. Thanks again to all who attended. The Meridian Street Foundation was very pleased see so many neighbors get acquainted. More events are coming — don't miss out!

Alice Berger, Julie O'Brien, David Stahl and David Berger.

Brent Harvey, Fred Shorter, and Gwen Harvey.

MEMBERSHIP DESK

ROME NKOSI | MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

First I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our new residents of the Meridian Street Foundation Historic district. You will find the charm of owning an historic residence and living in an historic community a rare and valued experience. Consider the MSF district a Planned Development Community (PDC) without the fences. Whether you are a current or new resident consider sharing your talents and ideas on one of our board committee's. Which committee you say? There are many to choose from: Land Use, Beautification, Traffic and many more. For a list of the committees and chairs, access our website at: www.meridianstreetfoundation.org then click on MSF Board.

I would also like to thank our residents, current and new that sent in their annual dues for 2005. To date over 100 residents have supported the MSF mission, helping to fund the many projects that are critical in insuring that the MSF district retains its historic character. If you have not sent in your dues its not too late. You can use the envelope in our current newsletter or access our website and click on Membership for a form. Remember all dues are now mailed to our post office box at: Meridian Street Foundation, P.O. Box 88451., Inpls, IN 46208-0451

Have questions? Contact me or any board member. See newsletter or website for a list of board members or look for us on Saturday, May 14th. MSF board members will be going door to door to pass out Meridian Street Foundation Homeowner Packets which include the Design Guidelines. Enjoy your spring. It's long overdue.

Editor's Note: An updated list of all MSF members will be printed in the September 1, 2005 newsletter.

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References Available

317.254.5611

John Sabens, *Owner*
info@bellavistalandscaping.com
www.bellavistalandscaping.com

REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP

BY G.B. LANDRIGAN, REALTOR

BOARD OF REALTOR'S MSF STATISTICS

figures from Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors

The first quarter of 2005 reflects what is expected to be the last vestiges of the "market correction" that began two years ago during the infamous property tax controversy.

In general, our Meridian Street Foundation area, along with other high-end older neighborhoods, experienced a significant difference between the number of homes on the market versus those that had sold. Where many had come to expect bidding wars on newly-listed properties, the public seemed to wait before "moving up." This caused homes to stay on the market far longer than was typical. Even so, the average sales prices of those that did sell continued to increase.

Homes that are priced in the $200-500,000 range seem to be selling at a relatively average clip. Those priced higher are still taking longer to sell. Still, we should also remember that we are only now entering what is traditionally the best home-selling season of the year. Most area Realtors have a great sense of optimism for the year.

Extensive information on MSF area sales and approximately 120 other North Side and Downtown neighborhoods is available at www.landrigan.com. All information in this article is provided by the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors.

NORTH MERIDIAN STREET
Homes Currently For Sale: 12
Average List Price: $905,617
Homes Currently Pending: 1
Homes Closed since 1/2005: 0

NORTH PENNSYLVANIA STREET
Homes Currently For Sale: 10
Average List Price: $543,160
Homes Currently Pending: 4
Homes Closed since 1/2005: 3
Average Sales Price: $313,466

NORTH ILLINOIS STREET
Homes Currently For Sale: 6
Average List Price: $275,550
Homes Currently Pending: 1
Homes Closed since 1/2005: 3
Average Sales Price: $274,333

SIDE STREETS
Homes Currently For Sale: 6
Average List Price: $417,933
Homes Currently Pending: 0
Homes Closed since 1/2005: 0

DID YOU KNOW?

The Meridian Street Preservation Commission's administrative code (925 IAC 2-4-2) application for a Certificate requires:

An application for a Certificate shall be filed in triplicate with all exhibits (together with eight additional copies thereof without exhibits) with the Commission and shall:

(a) State the name of the Owners and street address of the property on which the work for which the Certificate is sought is to occur, and the reason for the work

(b) Describe in **detail** (1) the **work** to be done, (2) the **change** resulting from such work, if any, in **architectural features** of the **structure** upon which such work is to be done, (3) the **nature** and **type** of **materials** to be employed, **specifying** which such **materials** will be **external** and **visible upon completion** of the work, (4) the name of the person who prepared the plans

(c) The application shall be accompanied by (1) **a current photograph** of the property taken from Meridian Street, if the work will be visible from Meridian Street (2) a **photograph** depicting the **location** of the work to be done and **clearly** showing **all features** to be **altered** or **affected** (3) a **site plan** indicating the accurate distance between the proposed construction and all property lines if new construction is proposed (4) if appropriate to the type of work being proposed, **accurate drawings**, **with dimensions**, showing the property or structure **before and after** the work for which the certificate is sought (5) **samples**, **pamphlets**, or other **information** explaining the **materials** to be used

The Commission may, before a hearing on a petition, require:

(1) Maps, plot plans, structural drawings and specifications, landscaping plans, floor plans, elevations, cross-sectional plans, architectural renderings, diagrams, or any other technical or graphic materials. (State Statute 36-7-11.2-34)

Alice Berger, Commissioner MSPC

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For information, call 257-3741 or email jmsabens@indy.net

OUR MISSION

MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

The Meridian Street Foundation is a charitable (501C3) foundation originally organized in 1960. The Foundation's chief purposes are the maintenance and improvement of existing health, safety and ecological standards, and the preservation of the architectural, historic and aesthetic significance of residential North Meridian Street and the neighborhood in which it lies.
Please Note: We live in the North Meridian Street Historic District, governed by the Meridian Street Preservation Act of 1971, administered by the Meridian Street Preservation Commission. Before undertaking any changes in structure or usage of your property, please check with either the MSPC or the Land Use Committee of the Meridian Street Foundation.