



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

City Council Chambers, 33 East Broadway Avenue Meridian, Idaho

Thursday, August 27, 2026 at 4:30 PM

MINUTES

ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

☒ Blaine Johnston, Chair

☒ Patrick Gittings

☒ Hailey Stewart

☒ Ken Freeze, Vice Chair

☐ Youth Commissioner (Vacant)

☒ Harold Wilson

☒ Heather Giacomo

City Staff: Arts and Culture Coordinator C. Schiffler, City Attorney B. Nary, and were also in attendance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Commissioner Freeze moved to adopt the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Gittings.

Vote: All in favor; motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [ACTION ITEM]

1. **Approve:** Minutes from the 7-23-26 Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission

Motion: Commissioner Freeze moved to approve the minutes from the July 23rd meeting; seconded by Commissioner Stewart.

Vote: All in favor; motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS [ACTION ITEMS]

2. **Report:** Meridian Water Tower Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places ~ *Barbara Bauer, Tag Historical Research and Consulting*

(See attached presentation)

Barbara Bauer presented an update on the National Register nomination for the Meridian Water Tower [05:23], noting that the draft was submitted to SHIPO (State Historic Preservation Office) just prior to the meeting to meet the October 15th deadline [05:14].

The nomination evaluates the 1977 water tower under **Criterion A** (Community Planning and Development) [06:59] for reflecting Meridian's rapid growth and expansion of municipal water infrastructure during the 1970s [06:20], and **Criterion C** (Engineering) [06:59] as a well-preserved, intact example of a Horton water spheroid manufactured by the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company [22:06].

Discussion followed regarding the tower's unique "sunshine yellow" color [36:03], its physical condition [29:11], its importance as a local landmark [38:08], and its use as a high point for the city's emergency operations antenna system [37:27].

OLD BUSINESS [ACTION ITEMS]

3. Downtown Overlay Update ~ *Chairman Johnston*

Chairman Johnston provided an update on the two working groups formed by Planning and Zoning regarding downtown overlay zoning and architectural standards [40:39].

Topics discussed included lot coverage, on-site parking access, extending the overlay district south from the tracks to Franklin Street [42:08], and exploring exemptions or appropriate architectural standards for historic buildings [42:50].

4. General Updates and Discussions:

- **2026 Guided Walking Tours:** Ken Freeze reported on the August 15 walking tour led by Freeze and Stewart [45:36], which had 11 participants and included a tour of the Pine Street School alongside a downtown car show [46:29]. The next tour is scheduled for September 19, to be led by Johnston and Wilson [46:50]. Discussion also covered potential route adjustments to focus more on historic residential districts [49:12] and exploring options for lapel/tour microphones [50:42].
- **Elongated Coin Machine:** Noted as an ongoing topic of discussion [47:02].
- **Next Steps: Downtown Districts Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP):** Chairman Johnston noted plans to put together a draft letter for the September meeting and reach out to Preservation Idaho for assistance [47:11].

NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

ADJOURNMENT [ACTION ITEM]

- **Motion:** Commissioner Freeze moved to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Wilson.
- **Vote:** All in favor; meeting adjourned at [52:58].

Video reference: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UshhrtzrxJo>

***Portions of this meeting minutes document were drafted with support from Google Gemini AI. All content was edited and reviewed by Cassandra Schiffler, Arts & Culture Coordinator.**

Meridian Water Tower

National Register of Historic Places Update

August 27, 2026

Presented by Barbara Perry Bauer, TAG Historical Research & Consulting



Meridian Landmark

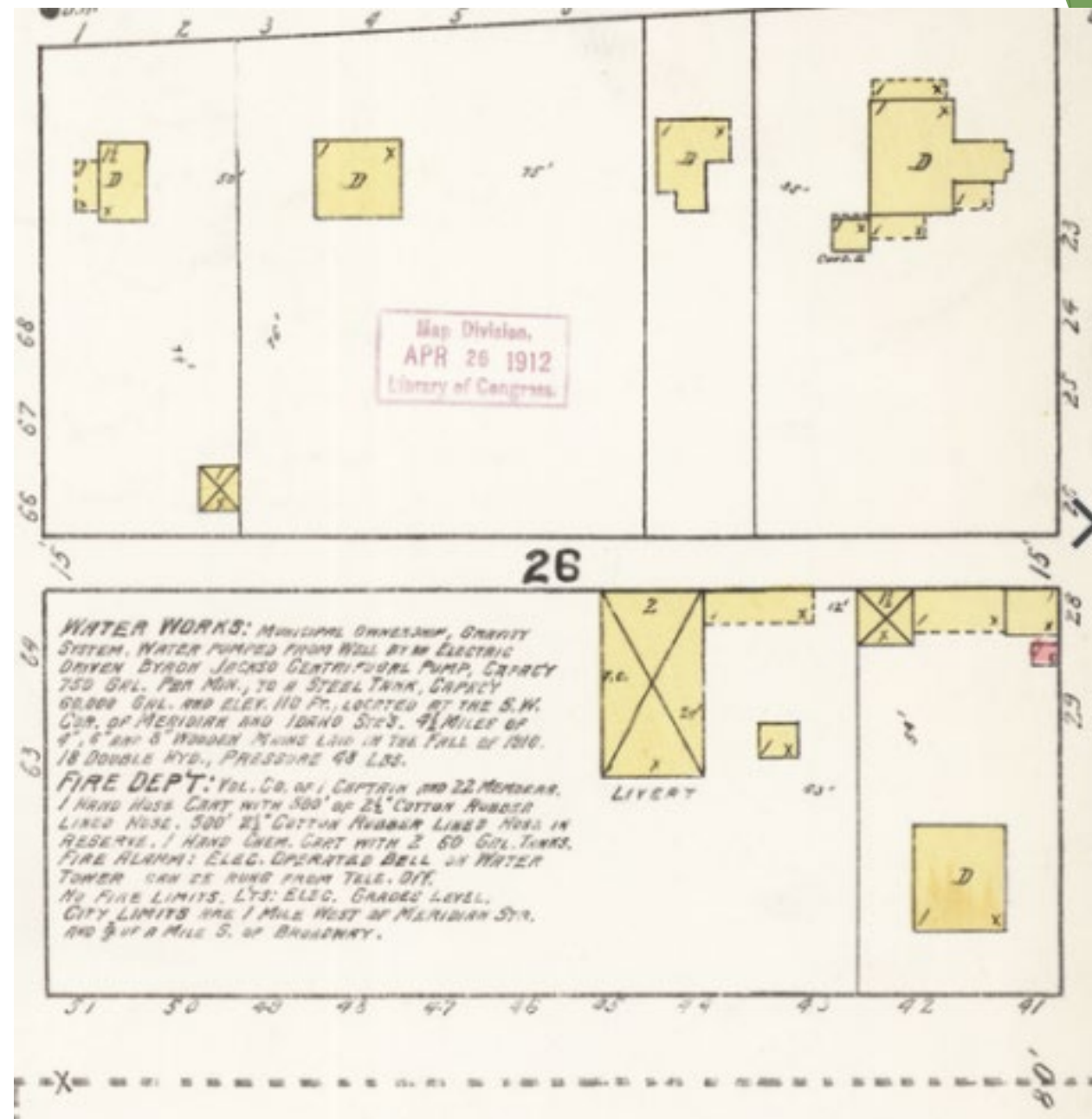
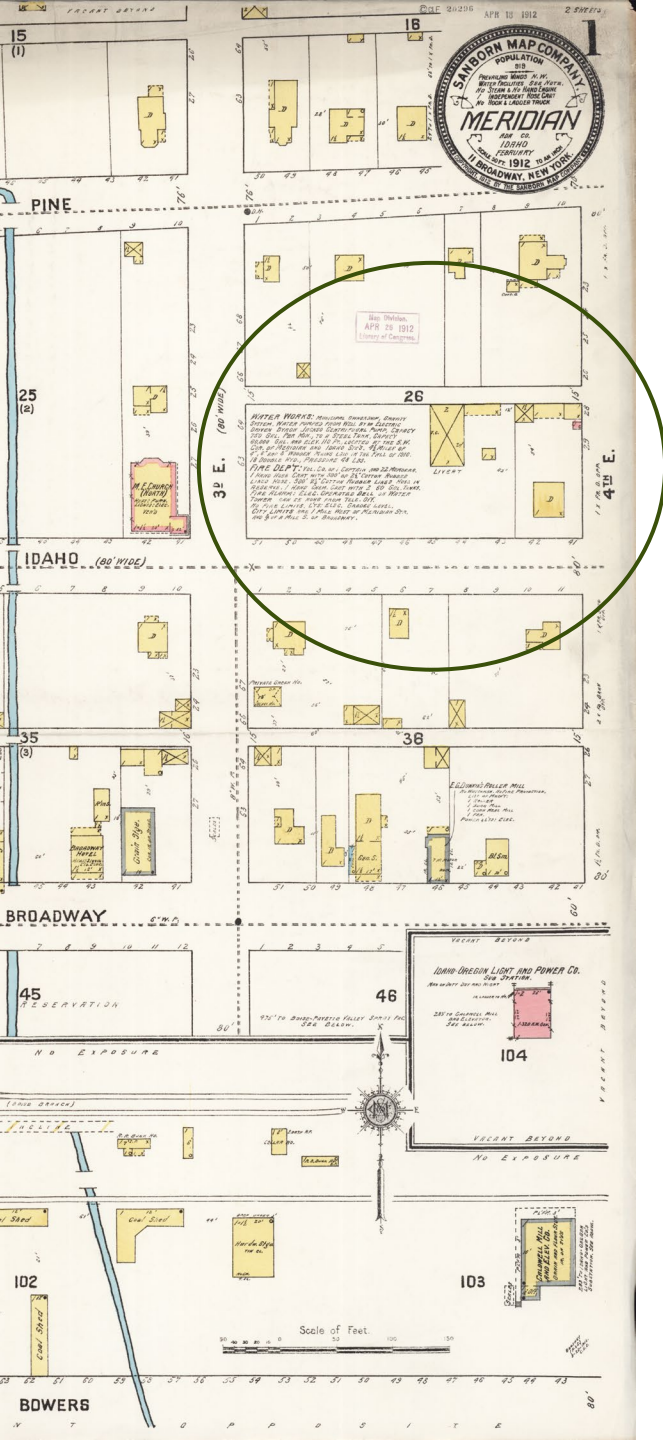
- ▶ The Meridian Water Tower is a 500,000-gallon Horton Waterspheroid manufactured by the Chicago Bridge & Iron Company.







Early Meridian and Water Development



1912 Meridian, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

Meridian water tower headed for Desert View

MERIDIAN — Desert View Water Corp. was tentatively accepted to take over Meridian's old water tower Monday night by the Meridian City Council.

The council accepted \$50 from the corporation as proof that the firm was interested in dismantling the 60,000-gallon water tower and reassembling it in Desert View Estates south of Boise.

Rick Orton, Meridian, representing the corporation, said negotiations were continuing on the price of moving the tank and its tower, but that dismantling could begin in about a month.

The silver tower would be taken to the subdivision at Kuna-Mora and Cloverdale roads and assembled at a

site near the east end of the subdivision, said Orton, a consulting engineer.

Desert View Estates has been plagued by low water supplies and water pressure, especially in the summer when lawn sprinkling is heavy, he said. The tower would be hooked up to three wells already in use and a fourth soon to be drilled, he said.

The subdivision has 203 homes and a population of between 600 and 800, said Gary Cullip, president of the water corporation.

The water tower now stands above Meridian City Hall. It was taken out of service when the city's new 500,000-gallon water tank was completed last year.



1910 Water Tower still in use at Desert View Estates.

Growth Pressures by the 1970s



Meridian, 1951



Meridian, 1980

Meridian gets \$1.45 million

MERIDIAN, Idaho (UPI) -- The U. S. Economic Development Administration has granted the City of Meridian \$1.45 million to expand its water and sewer systems.

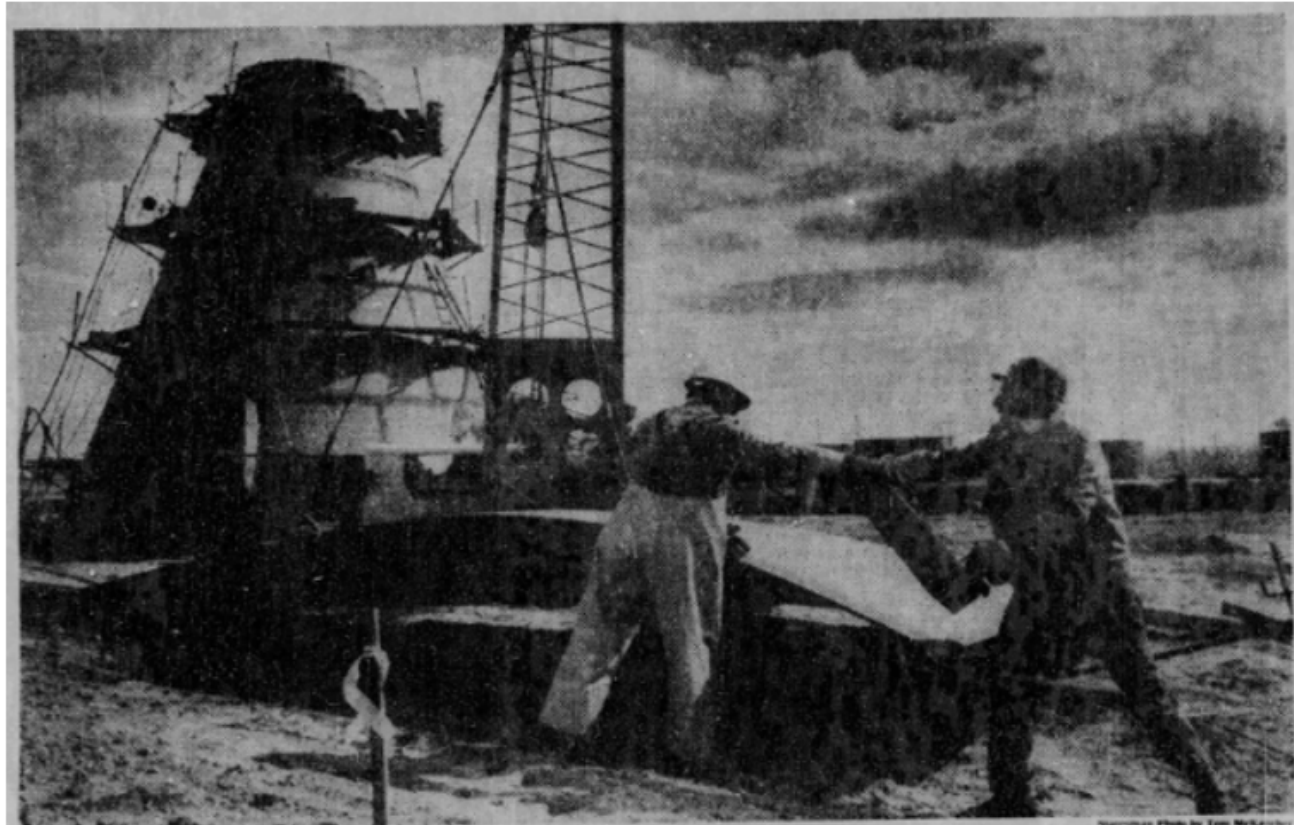
Mayor Don Storey said the entire project will cost about \$6.5 million. He said about \$5 million of it will come from Thursday's grant and from funds from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.

He said a recent bond issue authorized local funds for the project.

The project will include a new sewage treatment plant, two new wells, a new water tower and new water lines within the city so the system can carry more volume.

Grant part of a larger \$6.5-million project funded through federal and local sources. Improvements included a new sewage treatment plant, two wells, a new water tower, and new water lines within the city

Construction of the Tower

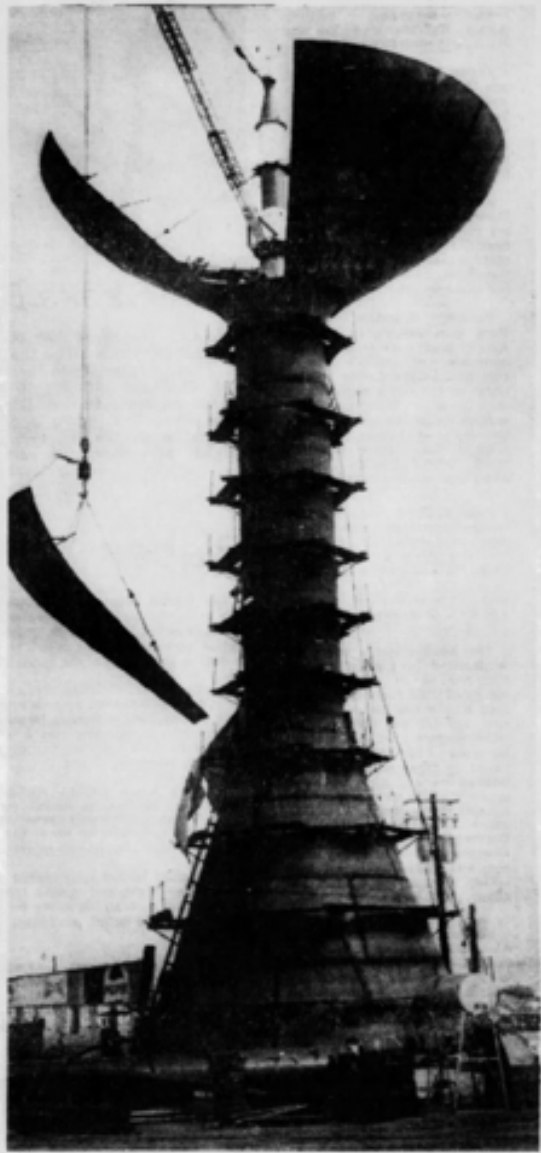


Tower Mushrooms

Chuck Jewell, right, Burley, gives a hand to his foreman, Terry Arnold, as the two work on a section of a new water

tower behind them in Meridian. When finished in May, the tower will be 140 feet tall and shaped like a mushroom.

The Idaho Statesman.
March 18, 1977



Spaceship in Meridian?

What appears to be the creation of some nutty scientist has been rising in Meridian the past few weeks. When finished, the mushroom-shaped object will supply water for Meridian residents. Above, workers from the Chicago Bridge and Iron Construction Co. lift a 30-foot, 9,000-pound section of Meridian's new water tower into place.

Completed Tower had a storage capacity of 500,000 gallons.

The new tower helped store municipal water, maintain water pressure, improve fire protection, and support Meridian's expanding water distribution system.

The tower reflects the City's effort to expand municipal infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing community.

The Idaho Statesman. April 7, 1977 p.1.



Criterion A- Community Planning and Development

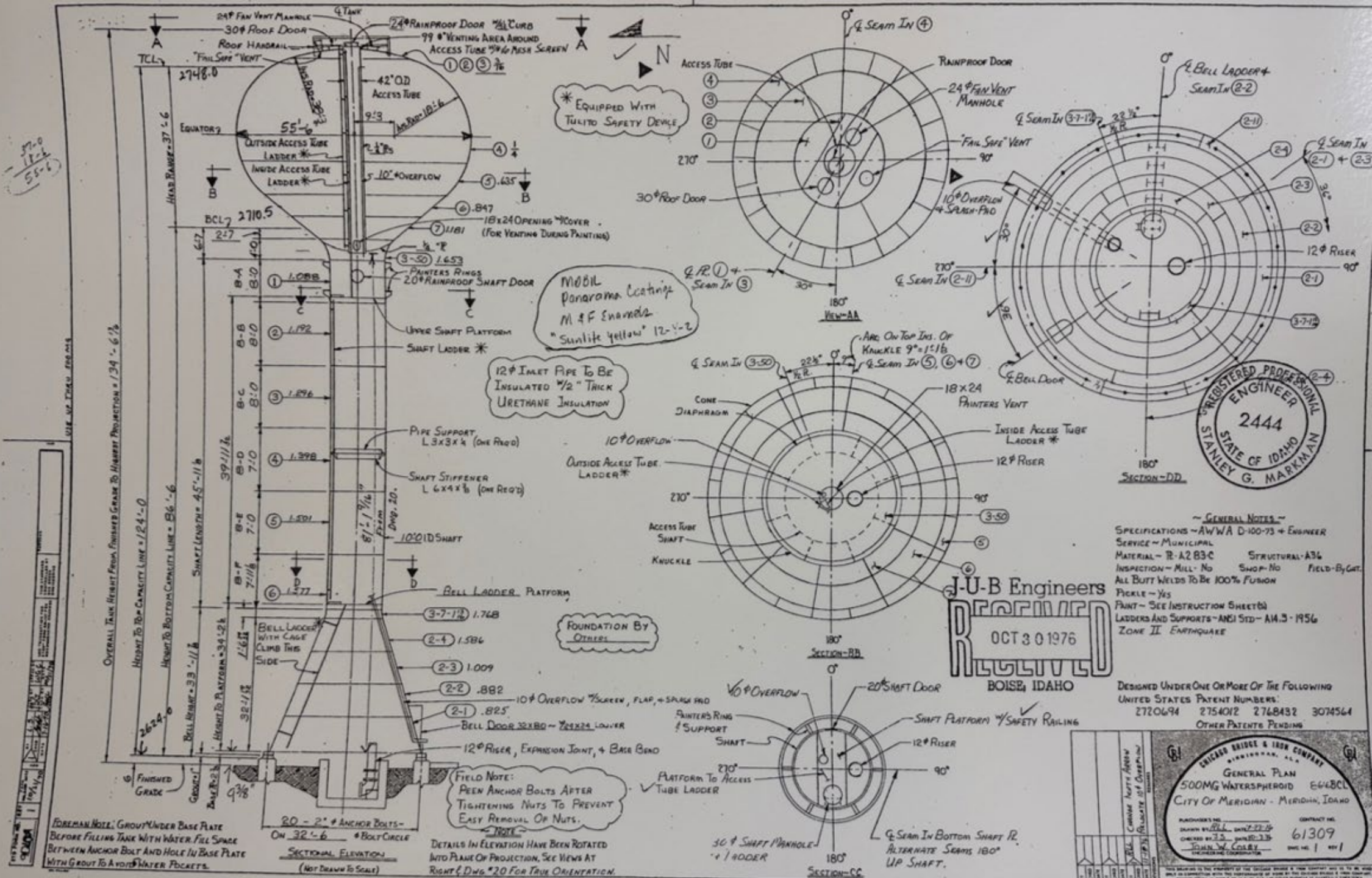
The Meridian Water Tower is recommended eligible under **Criterion A** in the area of Community Planning and Development.

Its significance is tied to Meridian's expansion of municipal infrastructure during a period of rapid population and residential growth in the 1970s.

The tower was constructed as part of a larger water and sewer improvement program that included new wells, new water lines, and expanded water storage. It represents the City's response to increased demand for public services as Meridian grew









I' Tank, University of
Idaho [89-4]
www.lib.uidaho.edu



Idaho Falls Water Tower replaced 2026

Idaho Falls Water Tower built 1937 by Chicago Bridge & Iron Company.

How Rare is It?

Meridian and Nampa each constructed 500,000-gallon spheroid elevated tanks during the 1970s, reflecting similar responses to rapid Treasure Valley growth.

The Nampa example was demolished in 2024, leaving the Meridian tower as a surviving example of this period of municipal water-system expansion.



Criterion C- Engineering

The tower is also recommended eligible under Criterion C in the area of Engineering.

It is an intact example of a late twentieth-century Horton Waterspheroid elevated steel municipal water storage structure.

The tower embodies engineering principles commonly used by municipalities after World War II to provide gravity-fed water storage, maintain system pressure, improve fire protection, and accommodate increased water demand.

Its spheroid tank profile, cylindrical pedestal, flared base, welded steel construction, and reinforced concrete foundation continue to illustrate the distinctive design and construction characteristics of this type of municipal water tower.

Integrity



Integrity

The Meridian Water Tower retains a high level of integrity.

It remains in its original location at 254 East Watertower Street. It retains its design as a spheroid elevated water tank supported by a cylindrical pedestal and flared base.

It also retains its historic materials and workmanship, including its welded steel construction and reinforced concrete foundation. The surrounding fenced utility yard remains intact and continues to convey the tower's municipal utility setting.

Because the tower remains highly recognizable as the 1977 public works structure built for Meridian's water system, it retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.



Why it Matters



Conclusion

- ▶ Under Criterion A, it is significant in Community Planning and Development for its association with the expansion of Meridian's municipal water system during a period of rapid growth.
- ▶ Under Criterion C, it is significant in Engineering as an intact example of a Horton Waterspheroid manufactured by the Chicago Bridge & Iron Company.
- ▶ The tower was planned during 1976, completed and placed into service in 1977, and dramatically increased Meridian's municipal water-storage capacity.
- ▶ Nearly 50 years later, it remains a prominent feature of Meridian's skyline and an icon of the city.

Next Steps

- ▶ The draft has been submitted to SHPO. It is in line for review beginning in October.
- ▶ SHPO will provide comments in December.
- ▶ Deadline for revisions is February.
- ▶ SHPO prepares documents to send to the Historic Sites Review Board
- ▶ Historic Sites Review Board meets in May.
- ▶ If NRHP approved by the Review Board, the nomination moves onto the National Park Service for final approval.