



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

City Council Chambers, 33 East Broadway Avenue Meridian, Idaho

Thursday, July 23, 2026 at 4:30 PM

MINUTES

ROLL-CALL ATTENDANCE

☒ Blaine Johnston, Chair

☐ Patrick Gittings, Vice Chair

☒ Hailey Stewart

☐ Ken Freeze

☐ James Abdel-Monem

☐ Harold (Greg) 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 Giacomo.

Vote: All in favor; motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [ACTION ITEM]

1. **Approve:** Minutes from the 5-28-26 Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission

Motion: Commissioner Freeze moved to approve the minutes from the May 28 meeting, seconded by Vice Chair Gittings.

Vote: All in favor; motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS [ACTION ITEMS]

2. **Update:** Downtown Overlay District and Design Guidelines Update ~ *Brian McClure, Long-Range Planning Supervisor*

Brian McClure presented an overview of a new zoning overlay and upcoming architectural standards manual updates for the downtown area. (See attached presentation).

The initiative focuses on clarifying design expectations, aligning with the comprehensive plan, maintaining existing base zoning via an overlay rather than a mass rezone, and refining architectural standards specifically for the city core.

The project spans three components: enabling overlay zoning in city code, defining the downtown overlay geography, and updating the architectural standards manual while preserving express, measurable ("yes/no") criteria. The process aims for City Council adoption by May of next year, with Chair Johnston participating in the steering and working committees, and HPC staff support Cassandra Schiffler being kept apprised.

Commission & Staff Discussion:

- **Architectural Context and Identity:** Chair Johnston asked how staff determines what makes Meridian unique in the Oldtown area compared to other places. McClure noted that while staff relies on "endurables" (such as architectural concrete, metal, or stone rather than vinyl), defining a distinct historical vernacular remains challenging under express standards, noting diverse public opinions on recent developments like the Keller building.
 - **Infill and Scale Guidance:** Commissioner Freeze shared his experience living in Oldtown Alexandria, Virginia, noting that newer multi-story buildings successfully complemented the historic aesthetic through consistent material use, particularly brick facades and appropriate scale. He emphasized a desire for guidance that encourages infill to fit the Oldtown Meridian character without stifling development. McClure invited commissioners to provide specific feedback on what architectural elements evoke Meridian's identity to help shape the standards.
 - **Historic Districts and Timeline:** In response to inquiries about coordinating this process with potential downtown historic districts, McClure noted that while the two efforts serve different regulatory functions, they can be mutually supportive. He confirmed that the project timeline anticipates working group sessions over the coming months, with regular updates provided to the commission.
3. **Update:** State Historic Preservation Office Reorganization and Staff Changes
Chair Johnston updated the commission that as of July 1, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is under the Office of Species Minerals and Energy Coordination and has lost a number of staff.

This organizational shift and staffing shortage will impact timeframes for ongoing work like nominations, though projects will still proceed at a slower pace.

OLD BUSINESS [ACTION ITEMS]

4. **Interim Report:** Meridian Water Tower Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

An interim draft of the water tower nomination prepared by TAG was included in the monthly packet. (See attachment).

Work is moving forward despite SHPO changes, and a final report presentation from TAG is expected at next month's meeting.

5. General Updates and Discussions:

2026 Guided Walking Tours (Johnston to lead July 18, Freeze and Stewart to lead August 15)

Chair Johnston led the July 18 tour, which had a successful turnout of about 9–10 attendees. Commissioners Freeze and Stewart are scheduled to lead the upcoming August 15 tour. Challenge coins were distributed for the events.

Elongated Coin Machine

Discussions continue with Josh Everts regarding machine implementation.

Next Steps: Downtown Districts Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

Chair Johnston noted that despite the recent SHPO staffing losses and reorganization impacting timelines, the commission intends to push forward with the NRHP district process.

To help mitigate SHPO coordination delays, the commission discussed reaching out to Preservation Idaho as an external resource to assist with the property owner outreach meeting and coordinating notification letters to property owners.

Information for property owner mailing addresses have been created—covering approximately 20 addresses. Letters to send to the owners need to be drafted.

NEXT MEETING: AUGUST 27, 2026

ADJOURNMENT [ACTION ITEM]

Motion: Commissioner Freeze moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Stewart.

Vote: All in favor; meeting adjourned.

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

MEMORANDUM

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



July 17, 2026

TO: Historic Preservation Commission
CC: Cassandra Schiffler, Arts & Culture Coordinator
FROM: Brian McClure, Long Range Planning Supervisor
RE: Downtown Overlay and Standards Project

The Meridian City Council has directed staff to pursue a Downtown Zoning Overlay and related update to the City's Architectural Standards Manual. This project will include three components: adoption of code provisions enabling zoning overlays; creation of the Downtown Overlay zoning district; and updates to the City's Architectural Standards Manual to incorporate the Overlay and establish downtown-specific express design standards. This work is an outcome of the ongoing coordination between City Council and the Meridian Development Corporation, the City's Urban Renewal Agency.

The first component, development of code provisions enabling the use of zoning overlays, is largely complete and pending either a stand-alone code amendment or inclusion with the broader project approval. The second component, the Downtown Overlay itself, is more complex, defining the additional standards that apply within the overlay district. Current work focuses on unifying elements of site and architectural design review, with particular emphasis on the public realm. The geography of the overlay is generally aligned with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

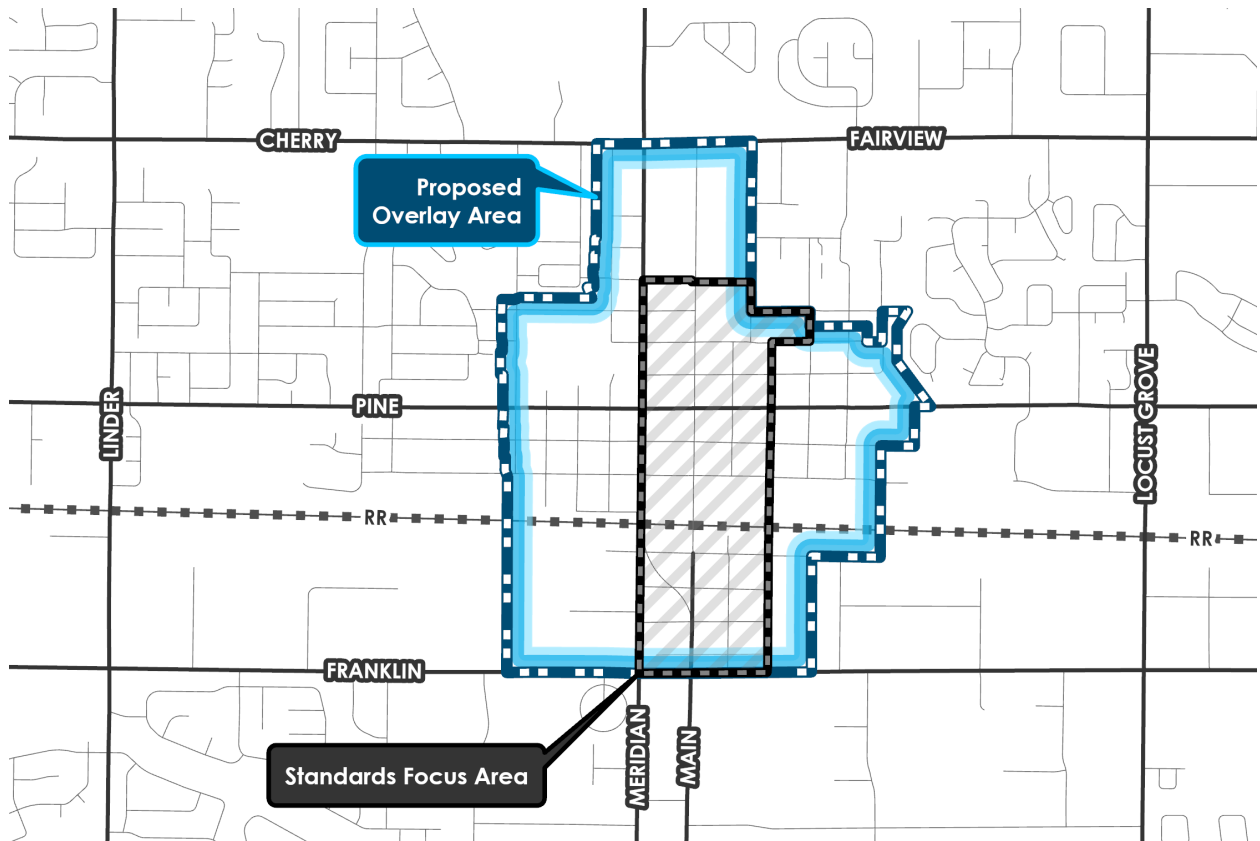
The third component is an update to the express standards within the ASM. Express standards are objective and measurable, rather than relying primarily on discretionary review. The area of application for these new architectural standards would be around what is sometimes known as the City Core (see attachment), with most of the larger overlay focusing on the public realm.

Downtown functions as a single place, yet its current design standards vary by underlying zoning district, often changing several times within a single block. The proposed update instead organizes standards around the character and function of downtown, rather than strictly parcel-by-parcel zoning-based standards. While the standards will remain objective and measurable, staff intend to develop them in a manner that respects Meridian's historic character while supporting continued investment and evolution of downtown.

City staff will be keeping the Commission apprised of the project status. Commissioner Johnston has agreed to participate on the project's Technical Working Group, and staff will continue coordinating with Cassandra throughout the project.

Attachments:

1. Project Area Map



Downtown Overlay & Architectural Standards



Historic Preservation Commission

July 23, 2026

Brian McClure, Long-Range Planning Supervisor

History



- ❑ MDC coordinating completed their Destination Downtown 2.0 plan
 - Included many requests to City. Some related highlights include:
 - Zoning code changes
 - Architectural Changes
 - Placemaking improvements
- ❑ Multiple Joint Meetings between MDC and City Council have occurred regarding the Plan



City Council Direction

- ❑ Clarify and improve expectations and consistency
- ❑ Implement Overlay that aligns with Comprehensive Plan
 - Maintain existing zoning
 - Require public realm improvements
- ❑ Implement Architectural Standards that respond to downtown **area**, instead of patchwork zoning
 - Focus new standards on “City Core”



Concept Direction

Three components:



Tool

Enable Zoning Overlays (ready)



Geography

Define Downtown Overlay (working)

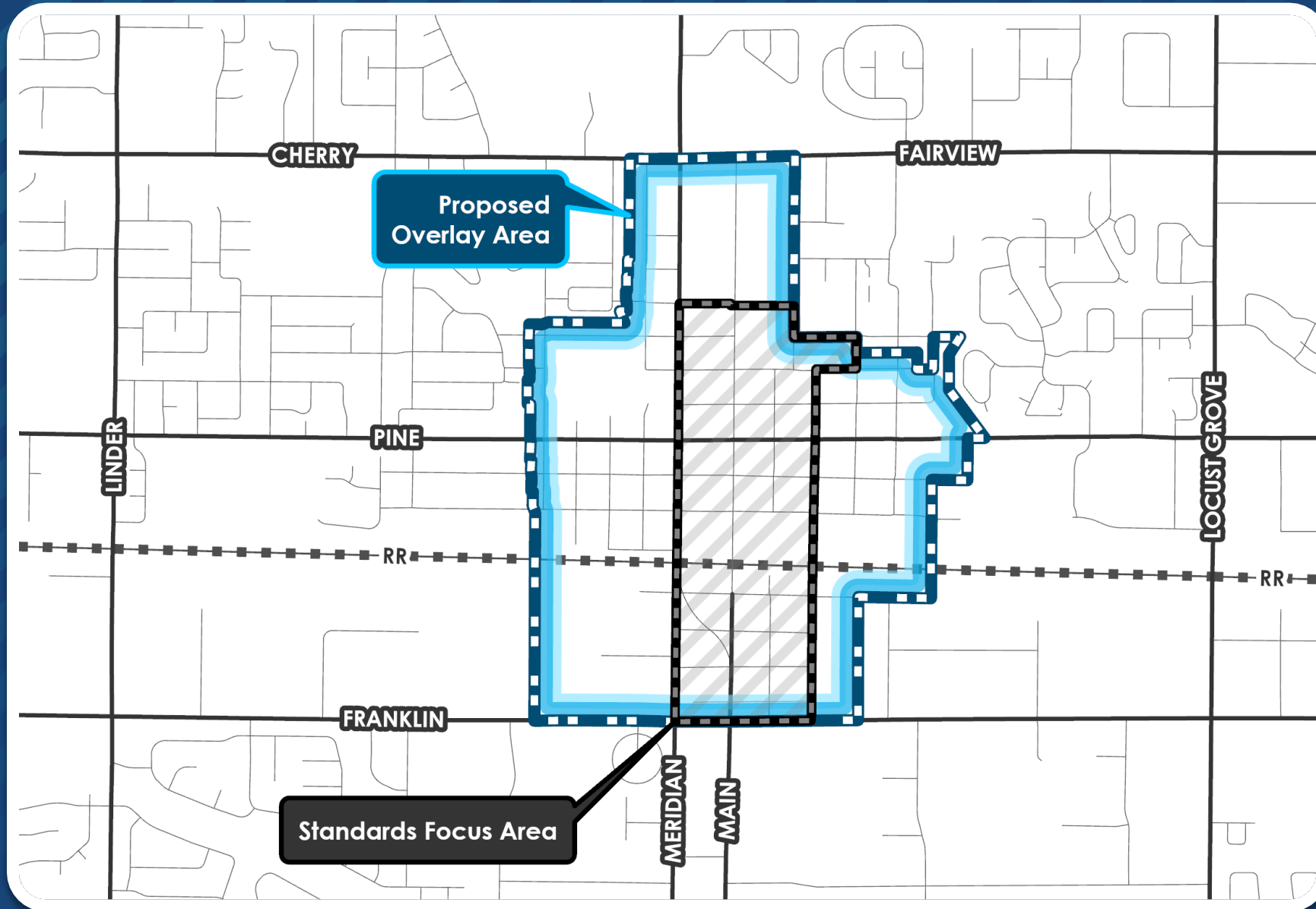


Standards

ASM Update, Focus Subarea (working)



Boundaries



Review Framework

- City Council (lead)
- Steering Committee
- Technical working groups
 - Overlay – Code
 - ASM Update
- Stakeholder Groups
 - Generally, via working group participation
 - Other updates as needed
- Planning & Zoning Commission
- Historical Preservation Commission
- Public involvement opportunities



Next Steps

- Technical Working Group Meetings
- Updates to stakeholder groups
- Outreach
- Public Hearings



QUESTIONS



Legend

- Railroad
- Existing City Core
- Urban Renewal Areas
- Parcels
- Overlay
- Comp Plan Alignment
- Priority Standards

Downtown Overlay

Print Date: 5/5/2026 | User: bmcclure

The information shown on this map is compiled from various sources and is subject to constant revision. The City of Meridian makes no warranty or guarantee as to the content, accuracy, timeliness, or completeness of any of the data provided, and assumes no legal responsibility for the information contained on this map.

MERIDIAN
IDAHO



TAG Meridian Water Tower NRHP Progress Update

July 17, 2026

TAG with Jeffrey Holley, M.A., conducted a site visit on March 3, 2026, with members of the Meridian Historic Preservation Commission and the City of Meridian Public Works Department, Water Division. During the site visit the water tower and the surrounding property were photographed in accordance with National Park Service documentation standards

TAG attended the March 26, 2026, Meridian Historic Preservation Commission meeting to introduce the project and provide an initial status update.

Research was conducted throughout April, May, and June using City of Meridian records, Meridian Public Library collections, historic newspapers, online resources, and materials provided by the City of Meridian. Barbara Perry Bauer worked with Dennis Teller of the Meridian Public Works Department, Water Division, who supplied digital copies of the original engineering plans and related project documentation. Additional fieldwork included a June site visit to Desert Sage Estates to photograph the relocated 1910 Meridian water tower for comparative documentation.

Preparation of the National Register of Historic Places nomination is well underway. A draft nomination has been completed, with Jeffrey Holley assisting in the preparation of the architectural description and technical review of the water tower.

A draft of the nomination is attached for review. Remaining work includes:

- Expanding the municipal water system history in the Statement of Significance.
- Completing the Criterion A and Criterion C significance discussions.
- Finalizing citations and bibliography.
- Preparing maps, photographs, and photograph log.
- Completing final edit and formatting of the nomination.

TAG will attend the August 27, 2026, Meridian Historic Preservation Commission meeting to provide a final project update and present the completed nomination.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Meridian Water
Tower

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)
N/A**2. Location**Street & number: 254 E Watertower
StreetCity or town: Meridian State: Id County: AdaNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:_____
Date_____
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Name of Property _____

County and State _____

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☐

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☐

District

☐☐

Name of Property

County and State

Site

Structure

☐

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Name of Property

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Meridian Water Tower is located at 254 E. Watertower Street in Meridian, Ada County, Idaho. Constructed as an elevated municipal water storage structure for the City of Meridian, the tower formed part of the “1976 Elevated Water Tank Foundation and Site Work Project,” prepared by J U B Engineers, Inc. under E.D.A. Project Number 07 01 01600. The property is best classified as a structure for National Register purposes. The tower consists of a 500,000 gallon spheroid steel tank supported by a cylindrical pedestal and flared pedestal base, set on a circular reinforced concrete foundation within a fenced municipal utility yard.

Elevated spheroid water tanks became a common form of municipal infrastructure during the mid-to-late twentieth century because they provided efficient water storage while maintaining system pressure through gravity-fed distribution.

The April 1976 tank elevation identifies the structure as a “500,000 Gallon Pedestal 245 Spheroid.” A metal manufacturer’s plate mounted near the base identifies the tank as a “Horton Waterspheroid,” built by Chicago Bridge & Iron Company of Oak Brook, Illinois. The plate lists

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Contract No. 61509, year 1977, capacity of 500,000 gallons, and height to bottom of 86.5 feet. The tower reflects late twentieth century welded steel tank fabrication, reinforced concrete foundation construction, buried waterline installation, valve and thrust block construction, electrical and telephone service coordination, gravel access road construction, and graded site work.

The tower is an engineered public works structure rather than architectural resource. Its character derives from engineered form, welded steel fabrication, reinforced concrete construction, water storage capacity, and municipal utility function. The structure stored municipal water, supported pressure regulation, connected to Meridian's water distribution system, and reflected late twentieth century public works expansion in the city. Together, these features document the tower as a public works installation built to store water, maintain pressure, and support Meridian's expanding municipal service network.

Current field investigation confirms that the meridian Water Tower retains its original location, design, materials, workmanship, and setting. The nominated property includes one contributing structure, the Meridian Water Tower, and associated site features related to its 1976 waterworks function, including the circular reinforced concrete foundation, fenced utility yard, access drive, valve features, waterline connections, and service components. The 1976 site plan defines "Tank Site Work" as work within the area bounded by the chain link fence. No separate noncontributing resources are identified within the nominated boundary.

Narrative Description

Location and Setting

The Meridian Water Tower occupies a defined municipal utility site shown on the April 1976 general site plan as approximately 100 feet by 100 feet. The plan shows the tank centered within the property lines, with an approximate tank base, approximate tank foundation limits, tank center, gravel road, chain link fence, water line, and limit line of sight and access road surface identified. The vicinity sketch places the tank site near West Idaho Avenue, Railroad Street, and the Oregon Short Line Railroad corridor. The current field sign identifies the property as City of Meridian Water Tower and Municipal Water System, PWS ID 4010097.

The site functions as a working waterworks setting rather than a landscaped civic space. Current field photographs show the tower within an open gravel surfaced utility yard enclosed by chain link fencing. Low vegetation appears within portions of the yard, while open clearance remains around the foundation, pedestal, valves, and service equipment. Adjacent low scale industrial, utility, and rail corridor conditions remain visible beyond the fence. This setting supports maintenance access, visual inspection, public safety, and operational control.

The tower forms a prominent vertical landmark within Meridian's built environment because of its height, elevated tank, open utility setting, and municipal lettering. The tower's height, open

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utility setting, and municipal lettering make it visible from nearby streets and identify it as civic infrastructure within Meridian's built environment.

Physical Description

The 1976 drawings document the tower's original design and site organization. Current field photographs document the tower's existing physical condition and show retained character defining features as well as later or updated service components associated with continued municipal operation. The tower is best understood as an integrated municipal waterworks system. Its historic character depends on the relationship among the elevated tank, pedestal, foundation, access road, fenced service yard, waterline connections, valve features, and electrical and telephone service. The April 1976 general site plan locates an "Approximate Tank Base," "Approximate Tank Foundation Limits," and "Tank Center" within the property. This organization remains central to the property's historic character because the site functioned as a designed public works installation, not an incidental open lot.

The tank is the elevated spheroid storage vessel, the pedestal is the cylindrical steel support shaft, the drywell provides internal access, and the reinforced concrete foundation anchors the assembly at grade. The tower rests on a circular reinforced concrete pedestal foundation documented in the 1976 foundation drawings. The foundation plan shows the tank centered within a circular footing mat, with anchor bolts equally spaced around the ringwall and an electrical entrance through the ringwall where required. The foundation sheet lists approximate foundation quantities of 211.7 cubic yards of concrete and 27,755 pounds of reinforcing steel. A table of loads identifies stored water as the dominant load, listing 4,231.8 kips for water, 98.2 kips for metal, 254.4 kips for concrete, and a total minimum load of 4,584.4 kips.

Current photographs show a raised circular concrete foundation ring at the base of the flared pedestal. Regularly spaced boxed anchor bolt housings, painted to match the tower, are mounted around the perimeter and mark the structural connection between the steel pedestal and the reinforced concrete foundation. Dark staining, coating wear, and surface grime appear along the foundation ledge and lower pedestal, especially where water and debris collect.

The 1976 plan documents the foundation as part of an engineered site response. The "Meridian Water Tank Foundation Investigation" locates the staked center of tank at elevation 2621.96 feet and places three test borings, D.H. 1 through D.H. 3, around the footing mat. The boring logs record topsoil, clayey silt, silty or gravelly sand, sandy gravel, groundwater in portions of the boring logs, and Payette Formation bedrock. These materials document subsurface analysis before construction and link the foundation to site specific soil, groundwater, and bedrock conditions.

Above the foundation, the tower rises on a cylindrical steel pedestal with a flared conical base. At the base, the cylindrical pedestal widens into a flared conical transition above the circular concrete foundation, visually and structurally mediating between the narrow steel shaft and the broad foundation ring. The single pedestal support concentrates the tower's load and visual mass into one vertical shaft rather than an exposed steel frame. This form differs from earlier multi leg

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elevated tanks and gives the structure a simple late twentieth century infrastructure profile. Current photographs show visible vertical and horizontal welded seams beneath the exterior coating, indicating welded steel plate construction.

The pedestal supports a spheroid steel storage tank. The 1976 tank elevation identifies the structure as a "500,000 Gallon Pedestal 245 Spheroid." The tank has a capacity of 500,000 gallons and an approximate projected diameter of 40 feet, based on the dimension associated with the "Approximate Tank Base" on the general site plan. The tank elevation identifies the high water line, low water line, roof hatch with vent, vent and manhole, ladder, 36 inch diameter drywell with ladder, painters' rings, platform, anchor bolts furnished by the tank supplier, 12 inch diameter supply main, tank pedestal, concrete floor by others, and tank foundation and valve pit by others.

The tower rises approximately 138 feet above grade. A metal manufacturer's plate mounted near the base identifies the tank as a "Horton Waterspheroid," built by Chicago Bridge & Iron Company of Oak Brook, Illinois. The plate lists Contract No. 61509, year 1977, capacity of 500,000 gallons, and height to bottom of 86.5 feet. The plate provides field evidence for the tank's proprietary type, manufacturer, capacity, contract

The tower includes access and maintenance features associated with municipal operation. The tank elevation identifies a ladder, platform, painters' rings, roof hatch with vent, vent and manhole, and 36 inch diameter drywell with ladder. Current photographs show painters' rings encircling the upper pedestal below the tank bowl, with a small circular access plate or hatch on the pedestal wall. Dark streaking appears below the tank bowl and around the upper pedestal, indicating weathering and coating exposure in areas subject to runoff. These features document the tower as a maintained structure with internal circulation, inspection access, and occupational safety features.

The base entry area includes a projecting personnel entry with a metal door, exterior concrete pad, grated metal platform, conduit runs, control equipment, and a large valve wheel mounted on the door assembly. The entry provides access to internal service space within the pedestal and reflects the tower's continued use as a maintained municipal utility structure. Some equipment at the entry, including conduit, control boxes, and door hardware, appears to reflect later operational maintenance or updates rather than original 1976 fabric.

The water system connection appears at the base of the tower. The site plan shows a 12 inch water main constructed under separate contract, with a 12 inch tee and thrust block, 12 inch gate valve and thrust block, 12 inch cast iron plug and thrust block, and connection to the 12 inch water main. The valve anchor detail specifies 2500 psi concrete poured against undisturbed earth and anchor bars of 1 inch diameter minimum for valves connected to PVC pipe. The valve vault drawings document ladder steps, pipe penetrations, watertight joint treatment, and drainage through a sump with a 4 inch clay tile drain.

Current waterworks components include above grade valve assemblies, flanged pipe connections, black pipe segments, pipe supports, and a concrete valve vault or box with a metal grate. These components occupy the gravel surfaced yard near the tower base and maintain the

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physical relationship between the elevated storage tank and the municipal water distribution system. The visible valve and pipe assemblies should be treated as current operational components unless municipal records confirm original 1976 materials or replacement dates.

Electrical and communication systems form part of the original waterworks installation. The electrical sheet locates Panel A and the Power and Telephone Board inside the tank pedestal near the entry. It specifies a 120 and 240 volt, 60 amp panel, copper wiring, rigid metal conduit where exposed to physical damage, PVC Schedule 40 conduit underground and under slab, coordination with Idaho Power, and 2 inch PVC telephone conduit routed for Mountain Bell service. The sheet also documents pole mounted exterior lighting, interior tank support lighting, and ladder shaft lighting. These systems supported operation, inspection, safety, and communication at the tower site.

The site enclosure includes chain link fencing and a vehicular gate. The 1976 chain link fence detail specifies a 6 foot fence with a 3 strand barbed wire top, 45 degree barbed wire supports, terminal, corner, and gate braces at 10 foot maximum spacing, and concrete post foundations. The gate detail specifies a 20 foot gate opening, galvanized wire mesh with 9 gage minimum fabric, galvanized gate posts, hinges, braces, and a semi self draining center stop. Current photographs confirm chain link fencing and a vehicular gate with metal posts, hinges, latch hardware, and a mounted municipal warning sign. The presence, continuity, and condition of the barbed wire top should be verified in the field.

The access drive connects the tower site to the public street network and supports construction, maintenance, inspection, and operation. The access road plans define work limits from Station 5 plus 53.7 to Station 10 plus 88, including the short approach apron to the tank site. The profile shows the gravel roadway rising at shallow grades between the public approach and fenced tank enclosure. The typical access road cross section specifies 4 inches of three quarter inch minus crushed gravel over 8 inches of 3 inch minus pit run base gravel on compacted subgrade. The plan also notes a 20 foot ingress, egress, and water main easement, plus a 10 foot temporary construction easement.

Associated site features include the circular reinforced concrete foundation, fenced utility enclosure, vehicular gate, gravel access drive, open utility yard, valve pit, 12 inch water connections, pipe and valve assemblies, electrical service, telephone service, conduit, and control equipment. For this nomination, the fence, gate, access drive, valve features, and service equipment are treated as associated features of the contributing structure rather than separately counted resources. Their significance lies in their relationship to the tower's operation, access, maintenance, and connection to Meridian's water distribution system.

The exterior tank and pedestal carry a pale yellow coating. Current photographs show localized staining, dark moisture or biological streaking below the tank bowl, surface grime, and areas of coating wear near the base and concrete foundation ring. The tank displays MERIDIAN in large sans serif block lettering near the upper curve of the tank bowl. The lettering contributes to the tower's current civic identity and visual recognition. Its date should be verified before treating it as an original character defining feature.

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The tower appears maintained, with localized weathering. Current photographs show pale yellow exterior coating, dark streaking below the tank bowl, surface grime at seams and rings, coating wear near the foundation ledge, staining at anchor bolt housings, and visible wear on exposed valve and pipe assemblies. These conditions appear consistent with an operating or maintained waterworks structure and should be documented as part of the resource's current physical condition rather than treated automatically as integrity loss.

Resource Inventory

Resource 1: Meridian Water Tower

Resource Type: Structure

Evaluation: Contributing

Date of Construction: 1976, with 1977 manufacturer's plate date requiring confirmation

Engineer: J U B Engineers, Inc.

Owner or Client: City of Meridian

Associated Project: 1976 Elevated Water Tank Foundation and Site Work Project, E.D.A.

Project Number 07 01 01600

The Meridian Water Tower stands as the primary structure within a fenced municipal utility parcel at 254 E. Watertower Street in Meridian, Idaho. The tower occupies the interior of the site and serves as the focal point of the property. The general site plan shows the tank centered within a defined site measuring approximately 100 feet by 100 feet, with a gravel road, property line, water line, chain link fence, tank center, approximate tank base, and approximate tank foundation limits identified. Current photographs show the tower within an open gravel yard with an access drive, chain link fence, gate, valve connections, electrical service, telephone service, base entry equipment, and other service components forming the associated waterworks setting.

The structure consists of a spheroid steel storage tank supported by a cylindrical pedestal and flared pedestal base. The 1976 tank elevation identifies the tower as a "500,000 Gallon Pedestal 245 Spheroid." The tank has a capacity of 500,000 gallons and an approximate projected diameter of 40 feet, based on the general site plan. The tower rises approximately 138 feet above grade, pending confirmation of the measured datum. The manufacturer's plate identifies the tank as a Horton Waterspheroid manufactured by Chicago Bridge & Iron Company in 1977, with Contract No. 61509 and a height to bottom of 86.5 feet.

The pedestal rises from a circular reinforced concrete foundation. The foundation plan shows anchor bolts equally spaced around the ringwall and an electrical entrance through the ringwall where required. The foundation sheet lists approximate foundation quantities of 211.7 cubic yards of concrete and 27,755 pounds of reinforcing steel. The foundation investigation places test borings around the footing mat and records topsoil, clayey silt, silty or gravelly sand, sandy gravel, groundwater in portions of the logs, and Payette Formation bedrock. Current photographs show boxed anchor bolt housings, a raised circular foundation ring, and localized coating wear and staining at the lower pedestal and foundation ledge. These plan and field details document

Name of Property

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the tower's foundation as a substantial engineered base designed for the load and site conditions of an elevated municipal water tank.

The tower includes character defining operational features, including a ladder system, drywell, platform, painters' rings, roof hatch with vent, vent and manhole, base access door, valve assemblies, pipe connections, conduit, service equipment, and water system connections. The 1976 plans document a 12 inch diameter supply main, 12 inch water main connection, tee and thrust block, gate valve and thrust block, cast iron plug and thrust block, and valve anchor details. Current photographs show above grade valve assemblies, flanged pipe connections, black pipe segments, a concrete valve vault or box with a metal grate, and updated base entry equipment. These features continue to express the tower's waterworks function, while visible equipment updates appear consistent with routine operation and maintenance.

The fenced utility yard contributes to the tower's waterworks character. The 1976 drawings document a 6 foot chain link fence with 3 strand barbed wire and a 20 foot vehicular gate. Current photographs confirm chain link fencing and a vehicular gate, while the presence and continuity of the barbed wire top should be verified. The access road plans define work limits from Station 5 plus 53.7 to Station 10 plus 88, including the short approach apron to the tank site. The access drive and gravel surfaced yard provide maintenance clearance around the tower base and connect the site to the public street network. For this nomination, these features are treated as associated features of the contributing structure rather than separate resources.

The Meridian Water Tower retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association as an elevated municipal water storage structure constructed for the City of Meridian in 1976 to 1977, subject to field confirmation of parcel continuity and operational status. Its spheroid steel tank, cylindrical pedestal, flared base, circular reinforced concrete foundation, open utility yard, water system connections, and associated site features continue to convey its original public works function. Integrity of materials and setting require field verification because repainting, equipment replacement, fencing changes, lighting changes, telemetry additions, access road resurfacing, and surrounding development may affect historic appearance. The tower remains legible as a late 1970s municipal waterworks installation and is classified as a contributing resource.

Changes Over Time and Integrity

The available documentation establishes the original 1976 project scope while current photographs document the tower's present condition. The 1976 plan documents the tank, foundation, site work, access road, chain link enclosure, valve connections, electrical service, telephone service, and related infrastructure. Current photographs confirm retention of the spheroid tank form, cylindrical pedestal, flared pedestal base, circular concrete foundation ring, open gravel utility yard, chain link fence and gate, base access door, painters' rings, valve and pipe assemblies, utility conduit, equipment cabinet, and manufacturer's plate.

Name of Property

County and State

• 1976: Elevated water tank, foundation, site work, access road, fencing, valve anchors, electrical and telephone service features, and related utility connections documented for the City of Meridian by J U B Engineers, Inc.

• 1977: Manufacturer's plate identifies the tank as a Horton Waterspheroid manufactured by Chicago Bridge & Iron Company, Contract No. 61509, year 1977, capacity of 500,000 gallons, and height to bottom of 86.5 feet.

• Date unknown: Exterior coating renewed or repainted as routine maintenance and corrosion protection.

• Date unknown: Base entry equipment, door hardware, conduit, control boxes, telemetry, lighting, valve components, and exposed pipe assemblies may represent routine maintenance, replacement in kind, or later operational upgrades.

• Date unknown: Existing chain link fence, gate, security equipment, and signage require comparison with the 1976 alignment, materials, and details.

The Meridian Water Tower retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association. The tower remains on its municipal utility site, retains its spheroid tank and cylindrical pedestal form, and preserves the plan documented relationship among tank, foundation, access road, fenced enclosure, valve features, and service equipment. Integrity of materials and setting require field confirmation because repainting, fence replacement, equipment upgrades, and surrounding development may affect historic appearance. These changes should be evaluated as routine infrastructure maintenance unless they remove, obscure, or substantially alter the tower's character defining form, materials, site organization, or waterworks function.

The tower retains integrity of location because it remains associated with its municipal utility site and waterworks setting. Location carries particular importance because the site supported storage, pressure regulation, distribution, access, and visibility within the water system. The tower retains integrity of design through its Horton Waterspheroid tank, cylindrical pedestal, flared base, circular foundation, and basic site layout. The design includes the tank, pedestal, foundation, access drive, fenced enclosure, utility routing, valve anchoring, electrical service, telephone service, and site grading.

The tower retains integrity of setting if the immediate utility site continues to express service space, open clearance, security, maintenance access, and visibility. The setting should not be judged as a picturesque landscape. Later development around the site does not necessarily remove setting integrity if the tower remains visually prominent and the immediate utility yard retains its open, fenced, and operational character. Current photographs support this assessment by showing the tower within a gravel surfaced utility yard with surrounding fencing, access, service equipment, and visible clearance around the base.

The tower retains integrity of materials if the original steel tank, pedestal, flared pedestal base, reinforced concrete foundation, anchor systems, and principal site features remain. Routine

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maintenance, including coating renewal, corrosion protection, valve replacement, fence fabric replacement, electrical updates, lighting replacement, door hardware, and telemetry equipment, should be separated from material loss. Such work does not necessarily diminish integrity if it preserves form, material character, function, and working utility setting.

The tower retains integrity of workmanship through its welded steel fabrication, tank erection, reinforced concrete work, anchor bolt installation, pipe and valve assembly, thrust block construction, site grading, fence construction, gate installation, road base preparation, and electrical service installation. These features remain legible in the tower's steel form, concrete foundation, anchor bolt housings, access features, and associated utility components.

The tower retains integrity of feeling because it remains visually prominent and continues to read as a municipal water tower within a working utility landscape. Feeling comes from the height, spheroid tank, cylindrical pedestal, flared base, pale yellow coating, municipal lettering, fenced service yard, gravel surfacing, access drive, and utilitarian equipment. The tower retains integrity of association because it remains physically and visually connected to Meridian's municipal water system and the 1976 public works project.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐

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B. Removed from its original location

☐

C. A birthplace or grave

☐

D. A cemetery

☐

E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

☐

F. A commemorative property

☐

G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

1977

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Meridian Water Tower is significant under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development as a principal component of the expansion of Meridian's municipal water system during a period of rapid residential and commercial growth in the late twentieth century. Completed in 1977, the elevated water storage tower provided increased storage capacity, improved system pressure, enhanced fire protection, and supported the city's expansion beyond its historic agricultural core. The property is also significant under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a well-preserved example of a late twentieth-century elevated steel water storage tower constructed by the Chicago Bridge & Iron company, a nationally recognized engineering firm that designed and built municipal water infrastructure throughout the United States. The period of significance extends from 1977 to ca.2000, encompassing the years during which the tower played a central role in Meridian's municipal water system and the community's transformation from a small agricultural town into one of Idaho's fastest-growing cities.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The development of Meridian's municipal water infrastructure is closely linked to the broader settlement and growth of the Boise Valley. Prior to Euroamerican settlement, the area consisted primarily of semi-arid sagebrush steppe crossed by a limited number of seasonal waterways. Agricultural development was constrained by the availability of water, making irrigation essential for permanent settlement and farming. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, irrigation projects transformed the landscape and laid the foundation for community

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development throughout western Ada County. Construction of the Settlers Canal in 1892 and the establishment of the Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District in 1904 provided reliable water supplies that supported agricultural production and population growth in the Meridian area. These irrigation systems converted previously arid lands into productive farms and orchards and established the economic base upon which the community developed.¹

Meridian was incorporated as a village in 1903 and remained a relatively small agricultural community for much of the twentieth century. Early development centered on irrigated agriculture, including orchards, dairies, and row-crop farming. As the community expanded, residents increasingly required public utilities capable of supporting residential, commercial, and industrial growth. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, local water needs were largely met through individual wells, small-scale distribution systems, and irrigation infrastructure adapted for domestic use. However, population growth following World War II created increasing demands for a modern municipal water system. Improved water service became essential not only for domestic consumption but also for fire protection, public health, and continued community development.²

The decades following World War II brought substantial demographic and economic changes to the Treasure Valley. Improvements in transportation, regional employment opportunities, and suburban residential development contributed to steady population growth in Meridian. By the 1970s, city officials recognized the need to expand municipal infrastructure to accommodate increasing water demand and to provide adequate system pressure throughout the community. Construction of elevated water storage facilities became a common solution for growing municipalities because such structures allowed communities to maintain reliable water pressure, increase emergency storage capacity, and improve fire protection services.

In 1977 the City of Meridian completed the Meridian Water Tower as part of a 1976 Elevated Water Tank Foundation and Site Work Project. Built by Chicago Bridge & Iron Company, the steel tower rises approximately 134 feet above the surrounding landscape and has a storage capacity of 500,000 gallons. At the time of its construction, Meridian had a population of approximately 5,000 residents, and the tower was designed to provide the water storage and system pressure necessary to support continued residential and commercial growth. The facility became a critical component of the city's water distribution network and facilitated expansion into areas south and west of the historic town center.³

For more than three decades, the Meridian Water Tower remained a principal component of the city's municipal water distribution system, serving a period of extraordinary population growth and suburban expansion. Although additional reservoirs and pumping facilities were constructed as Meridian's population accelerated during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the tower continued to function as both a key element of the municipal water system and a highly visible community landmark. Even after newer facilities assumed its operational role, the tower remained closely identified with Meridian's civic identity and its transformation from a small agricultural community into one of Idaho's largest cities.⁴

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Period of Significance

The period of significance begins in 1977, when the Meridian Water Tower was completed and placed into service as the centerpiece of a major expansion of the city's water system. The period extends to ca.2000, encompassing the decades during which the tower played a central role in providing water storage, maintaining system pressure, improving fire protection, supporting residential and commercial development, and facilitating Meridian's transition from a small agricultural community to a rapidly growing suburban city. Although the tower continued to function beyond this period, its primary historic significant is associated with the late twentieth-century expansion of Meridian's municipal infrastructure.

Criterion A

The Meridian Water Tower is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development because it is directly associated with the expansion of Meridian's municipal water system during a period of sustained residential and commercial growth. Completion of the tower in 1977 marked a significant investment in public infrastructure that enabled the city to meet increasing demands for municipal water service, improve fire protection, and support development beyond the historic town center. As Meridian's population grew during the late twentieth century, the tower became an essential component of the municipal water distribution network and facility the city's transition from an agricultural community to a suburban municipality.

Criterion C

The Meridian Water Tower is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a well-preserved example of a late twentieth-century elevated steel municipal water storage structure. Completed in 1977, the tower embodies engineering principles widely employed by American municipalities during the post World War II era to provide gravity-fed water storage, maintain consistent system pressure, improve fire protection, and accommodate expanding urban development. Its spheroid steel tank, cylindrical pedestal, welded steel construction, and reinforced concrete foundation illustrate the standard design characteristics of elevated municipal water towers constructed during this period.

The tower was constructed by the Chicago Bridge & Iron Company, one of the nation's leading designers and builders of municipal water storage structures during the twentieth century. Through Horton Waterspheroid design, welded steel fabrication, and standardized engineering practices, the company produced elevated water tanks for municipalities throughout the United States. The Meridian Water Tower retains the defining physical characteristics of this engineering tradition, including its spheroid tank profile, pedestal support system, welded steel construction, and original relationship to the municipal water distributions network.

The Meridian Water Tower retains the design, materials, workmanship, and engineering characteristics established at the time of construction. Although the surrounding community has expanded considerably since 1977 and the municipal water system has grown beyond the original facility, the tower continues to convey its historic engineering function through the

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retention of its original form, construction materials, structural system, and associated utility features.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- _____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- _____ previously listed in the National Register
- _____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- _____ designated a National Historic Landmark
- _____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- _____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- _____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- _____ State Historic Preservation Office
- _____ Other State agency
- _____ Federal agency
- _____ Local government
- _____ University
- _____ Other
- _____ Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____

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Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

3. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

4. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: _____ Easting: _____ Northing: _____

2. Zone: _____ Easting: _____ Northing: _____

3. Zone: _____ Easting: _____ Northing: _____

4. Zone: _____ Easting : _____ Northing: _____

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary includes the tank, pedestal, circular reinforced concrete foundation, fenced utility yard, access apron, valve features, and service components directly associated with the 1976 waterworks installation. The boundary captures the area necessary to convey the tower's historic function, access, maintenance clearance, and physical connection to Meridian's water distribution system. Areas outside the historic tank site, access easement, or utility enclosure have been excluded unless they retain documented association with the 1976 project.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated boundary encompasses the historic parcel associated with the construction and operation of the Meridian Water Tower as documented on the 1976 Elevated Water Tank Foundation and Site Work Project plans prepared by J-U-B Engineers, Inc. The boundary includes the tower and the site improvements constructed as part of the original project, including the reinforced concrete foundation, fenced utility yard, access aprong, valve assemblies, and associated utility features necessary for the operation and maintenance of the municipal water system. The boundary was selected to include the resources that retain a direct historic and functional association with the 1977 construction of the water tower while excluding adjacent municipal property and later utility improvements that do not contribute to the property's significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: _____
organization: _____
street & number: _____
city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____
e-mail: _____
telephone: _____
date: _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of ____.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 – 230 hours

Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.