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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Property Address:	<b>1624 Crescent Place, NW</b>	<b>X</b>	Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>White-Meyer House/Meridian Hill Historic District</b>		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>June 29, 2017</b>	<b>X</b>	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>15-205</b>		Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Steve Callcott</b>	<b>X</b>	New Construction
			Demolition
		<b>X</b>	Subdivision

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Meridian International Center, with Westbrook Partners, seeks on-going concept design review for construction of an apartment building on the site of the landmark White-Meyer house, a property that is also located in the Meridian Hill Historic District. The revised plans have been prepared by Perkins-Eastman DC Architects and Wolf/Josey landscape architects.

At the April meeting, the Board found that the revised proposal satisfied the concerns raised at the December 2016 meeting regarding the prominence of the entry, the treatment of the vehicular court, the Crescent Place edge condition, and the entrance stairs and hillside landscape. However, the Board asked to see an option that reduced the building by one floor as a point of comparison.

### **Revised Proposal**

The submission includes four iterations of the project: the December 2016 design when the Board first asked that a floor be removed (B); the April design that included graduated setbacks for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> floors and corner balconies to reduce the building's perceived height and width (C); a new option that reduces the building by one floor from that shown in December without the corner balconies but including the central entrance tower (D); and a new option that eliminates one floor from the midsection of the April design (E).

### **Evaluation**

One of the challenges in judging the different iterations is that they include not only variations in height but how the height is removed (from the top or from the midsection) and whether or not the corners should be solid or have balconies. As evaluated in the April report, HPO found the combination of upper floor setbacks and the carving away at the corners in C to be effective in reducing the apparent height and mass from that which was presented in December (B), but that some further design work needed to be done to ensure that the balconies were fully integrated into the vocabulary of the building.

However, if the Board believes that full removal of a floor is necessary to achieve compatibility, option D is both the more compatible of the two and the better architectural solution. It has the strength and classical proportionality that is consistent with the Beaux-Arts

inspired architecture in the historic district. By comparison, E has an insufficient and classically ill-proportioned midsection that is too small to support the two upper floors; the reduction in the height of the bays and the corner balconies further compound the problem and results in a design that is incompatible with the Meridian Hill Historic District.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Review Board find option C to be compatible with the character of the White-Meyer house and the Meridian Hill Historic District, and that final approval be delegated to staff. Alternatively, if the Board finds that it is necessary for a full floor to be removed to bring the height into compatibility, HPO recommends approval of option D, with final approval delegated to staff.*