Meridian House

Indianapolis, Indiana

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Submission Category: New Construction - (Project cost greater than $5 million)
Project Type: Private Residence
Project Address: 44 Wellington Road, Indianapolis, Indiana
Date of Substantial Completion: October 22, 2024

The Meridian House in Indianapolis is a 8,677-square-foot residence and private gallery designed to display an extensive collection of contemporary art. The plan is focused around a central atrium that serves as a circulation spine as well as a high-capacity space for philanthropic and arts-related functions. This dual public / private use allowed for some unique design solutions.

- **The House as Gallery**: The house is organized around a vaulted gallery atrium that floats between private residential wings. The central space is designed to serve a venue for arts and philanthropy, as well as functioning as a circulation core for a private home.

- **Daylight Modulation**: A central light monitor with north-facing clerestories diffuses soft, protective light for art preservation while minimizing artificial lighting demand. Skylights are used throughout the house to punctuate special features.

- **Rhythmic Structural Composition:** Influenced by artists like Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt, a continuous white rectilinear frame organizes the mass and defines programmatic elements.

- **Layered Materiality**: The smooth, white structural frame is infilled with planes of glass and locally sourced long-format Roman brick, providing texture and warmth that connects the house to its context of neighboring brick houses.

- **Hermetic, Yet Connected to Nature**: The gallery is positioned to block views of neighboring houses while focusing on wooded areas of the site perimeter. Floor-to-ceiling glass at the residential spaces connects the house to the landscape beyond.

- **High-Efficiency Envelope**: The structure features a high-performance enclosure with closed-cell foam insulation and a reflective white TPO roof membrane to mitigate thermal gain. A compact rectangular massing minimizes perimeter wall area.

- **Longevity**: Designed as a "heritage" structure with a 100-plus year lifecycle, the house is intended to be a substantial and permanent part of the city. Materials and details were designed with longevity and reduced maintenance in mind.

- **Environmental Health**: Museum-grade HVAC systems maintain precise temperature and humidity, ensuring superior air quality and health for both the collection and occupants.

Site Plan

1. Entry Court
2. Private Courtyard
3. Gallery Atrium

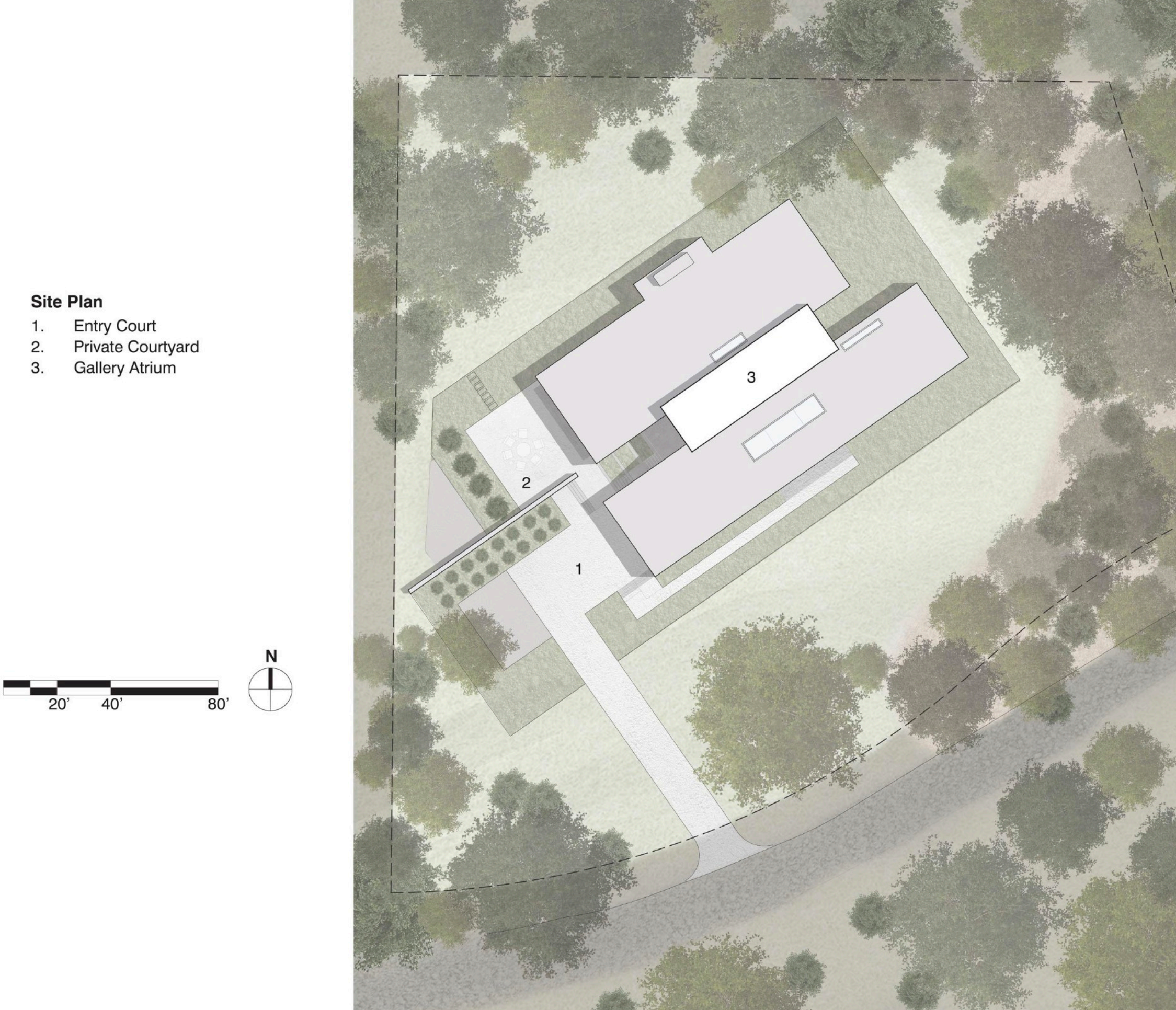




Photo: Douglas Friedman

Photo: Dror Baldinger

Photo: Douglas Friedman

Floor Plan

1. Entry Courtyard
2. Foyer
3. Gallery
4. Garage
5. Office
6. Bedroom
7. Living / Dining
8. Primary Suite
9. Kitchen / Family
10. Terrace







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AIA Framework for Design Excellence Highlights

Design for Well-Being:

The Meridian House prioritizes occupant well-being through a museum-grade environment that serves both art and people. A central light monitor and north-facing clerestories provide consistent daylight throughout the interior, reducing artificial lighting dependency while providing bright, elevating spaces. Advanced filtration and climate systems, essential for art preservation, ensure superior indoor air quality and humidity control for residents. Large glass end walls and floor-to-ceiling apertures create a seamless connection to the wooded landscape, fostering a restorative environment that blocks suburban views to focus entirely on nature. Materials that off-gas in a way detrimental to art preservation were avoided.

Design for Resources:

The Meridian House prioritizes longevity and efficiency by framing the residence as a heritage structure designed to last over 100 years, rejecting the waste typical of "disposable" housing. Its compact rectangular form optimizes the material-to-volume ratio, significantly reducing the required surface area for perimeter walls. The cladding selection favors durability, specifically using local concrete and long-format Roman brick sourced from local producers to minimize embodied carbon from transport. The hybrid steel framing system ensures structural durability; the steel components are fully recyclable if necessary, supporting a zero-waste lifecycle. This disciplined, high-quality approach ensures the building remains a permanent, low-impact cultural asset.

Client Impact Statement:

After discovering the Architect's prior work on light modulation, the clients commissioned a residence that would serve as both a private sanctuary and a world-class venue for their extensive collection of African American art and historic cookbooks. Their goal was a house where museum-grade display requirements and domestic life could coexist.

For the client, the impact is personal and transformative; the home successfully edits out the surrounding suburban neighborhood to focus entirely on the collection and the wooded landscape beyond. Beyond its residential function, the house provides a vital community asset as a space for arts philanthropy, ensuring the collection’s cultural significance is shared with broader audiences. The result is a highly tailored environment that exceeds the clients' specific needs.