

## Chapter One: 1920-1929

The first World War and the great “Spanish influenza” pandemic of 1918 had slowed Albuquerque’s population growth in the years just prior to 1920; and this sluggish growth had continued into the new decade. The 1920 census counted 15,157 residents living in the city. But substantial changes, especially in architecture and land development, were about to take place . . . and fast.

The AT&SF locomotive shops were significantly expanded and improved between 1914 and 1924. The original shops, constructed in the 1880s, were comprised of wood frame structures or stone masonry buildings with heavy timber framing; however, the massive new Machine



and Boiler shops utilized steel framing and glass curtain walls that proved to be a cheaper and easier way to build (pictured left). The oversized one-story buildings housed specialized work bays with skylights, and overhead traveling cranes (including one 250-ton crane) to facilitate the repair of the massive steam locomotives. To accommodate these

new buildings, the railroad acquired additional land south of Pacific Ave. along Second St.

And the 1920s was the start of the city’s “heyday” for commercial architecture with new hotels, movie theaters, and tall buildings. Albuquerque’s revitalization started with construction of the city’s first “skyscraper” and ended with six million dollars being spent in new construction between 1926 and 1930. In 1922, the nine-story First National Bank Building, designed by the firm of Trost and Trost, was built in the heart of downtown at the corner of Central and Third (pictured right). This three-part stacked vertical block building with Italianate styling dominated the city’s skyline and projected a modern, “big city” look. As the historian Charles Biebel notes, “The building clearly proclaimed Albuquerque’s prosperous commercial and financial affinity with similarly progressive communities from El Paso to Denver and Los Angeles to Chicago.” In addition to housing the city’s major financial institution (founded in 1881), the building’s upper floors contained the offices of the city’s leading professionals – physicians, dentists, insurance companies, and attorneys.



Two years later, work was completed on the six-story Sunshine Building, also designed by Henry Trost. Located just a block away from the First National Bank Building at the southeast corner of Central and Second, the Sunshine Building was also a three-part stacked vertical design with a heavy cornice that was topped by a balustrade and decorative urns. The building featured a combination of retail, offices, and a theater. The theater's entrance on Central was marked by an elaborate marquee of copper and glass. These two downtown edifices symbolized the promise of Albuquerque's commercial future in the early twentieth century.

The Franciscan Hotel, built in 1923 (demolished 1972) at the northwest corner of Central and Sixth, was another Trost and Trost design; however, for this building the El Paso firm used design elements derived from regional Spanish and Pueblo architecture (pictured right). It had an eight-story main structure with four, three-story towers on the corners to give the stepped back appearance of a traditional New Mexico Indian Pueblo. Its location, some six blocks from the railroad station but only two blocks from U.S. Highway 85 suggested the increasing popularity of the automobile in the city.



Inarguably, however, the *pièce de résistance* of downtown architecture in the 1920s was the KiMo Theater (postcard image below). Opened in 1927 on the northeast corner of Central and Fifth, its eccentric and somewhat fanciful design was a hallmark of the "Pueblo Deco" style. It



was commissioned by Oreste and Maria Bachechi, whose architect Carl Boller of Boller Brothers, visited the state's Indian Pueblos and reservations to gather ideas and examples of Native American symbolic and stylistic elements. The result was a theater featuring both movies and live performances housed in a one-of-a-kind edifice highlighted by a variety

of stylized Indian motifs and friezes made of tile and terracotta. The KiMo's already ornate façade was accentuated by an illuminated canopy and within a year of opening, a tall neon sign.

Housing development in the decade of the 1920s can be summed up in two words: automobile and annexation. The first automobile arrived in the city in 1897, and by 1910, there were 470 registered in the territory. But just ten years later the total number of automobiles had jumped to 17,720, and Albuquerque had many of them. Commercial streets were quickly graded and paved to accommodate the new mode of transportation, but residential areas soon followed. By 1923, 150 city blocks (21.5 miles) had been paved. In 1926, the federal highway system had designated Fourth St. as U.S. Highways 66 and 85, thus increasing interstate travel through the city.

The other major advancement affecting the city's development was political. In 1924, the state legislature passed a bill allowing the city to annex outlying areas with the consent of fifty-one percent of its residents. Prior to this, the city had annexed small parcels of largely undeveloped land. But with this legislation, the city began to pursue annexation of land with already developed housing additions, particularly on the East Mesa and the North End. Annexation would allow for the city population to immediately increase and thus significantly increase the tax rolls – annexation of the North End, for instance, would add \$2.5 million to the city coffers. Residents of newly annexed lands would benefit by having easier access to city services, such as water and sewer, gas/electric lines, and would lower insurance rates.

Unfortunately, things did not go as planned. In 1925, North End residents twice voted to reject annexation. Two years later, however, after a vigorous annexation campaign led by Clyde Tingley, the residents finally acquiesced and approved annexation, thus adding 379 acres to the north side of the city.

In contrast, the city's annexation of land on the East Mesa was a blockbuster deal that forever altered future development in the city. In April of 1925, the city annexed D.K.B. Sellers' University Height's water system and made significant upgrades to its distribution lines and fire protection capabilities. Two months later, East Mesa residents overwhelmingly approved the land annexation. The city immediately gained 4,166 acres – a roughly 350 percent increase in size! Albuquerque's eastern boundary was extended to what is now San Pedro Blvd., even though there were no houses east of Girard Blvd. The southern edge of the city limits extended what is now Gibson, and the northern boundary line was present-day Constitution Ave. This giant swath of land was now open for development within Albuquerque's city limits.

Clyde Tingley, ex officio mayor, led the charge for annexation and development. By 1927, mail service was extended into the subdivisions and street lighting was installed along Central Ave. from downtown to Yale Blvd. Tingley called it Albuquerque's "Great White Way." In 1928, he improved suburban transportation by not only paving streets but also eliminating trolley car service and replacing it with bus service, which provided more flexibility in routing. He also promoted the development of city parks in all sections of the city, for example, the creation of

Rio Grande Park with land donated by the Reynolds family. Tingley further promoted city beautification by encouraging suburban developers to add tree-lined medians to their housing tracts. And, of course, he is perhaps best known for the free distribution of Siberian elm trees to every homeowner in the city, the results of which are still seen today in Albuquerque's older neighborhoods. Tingley was so enamored with Heights that he and his wife Carrie built a home in the Terrace Addition at 1523 Silver SE in 1929.

### **Housing Development in the 1920s**

By mid-decade, housing was increasing steadily with the infill of lots in the Perea and Reynolds Additions. By 1930, there were 190 new homes in the latter addition, mostly Bungalow style houses, and a new eclectic style, Southwest Vernacular. New additions near downtown included the Manzano Court Addition, a two-block cul-de-sac just south of Mountain Rd. in 1923; noteworthy for the fact that it was laid out by Anna Gotshall, one of the city's first woman developers.

New housing south of Central and west of Fourteenth St. had always been hampered by low-lying, swampy lands that experienced frequent flooding. By the late 1920s, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District had been created to help control flooding in this section of the river, and a development group began buying land in this area that once belonged to Franz Huning and platted the Huning Castle Addition and New Country Club Addition in 1928. From the beginning these new subdivisions were envisioned as upscale developments, featuring custom-built, architect-designed houses highlighted by large garages, a nod to the increasing importance of the automobile. The developers also built on larger lots, eliminated alleys, and in contrast to the gridded street patterns found throughout New Town, they designed wide streets with sweeping curves – a design feature that as we will see became more commonplace on the East Mesa as well. These suburbs attracted wealthy buyers and prominent citizens with the home price reaching upwards of \$10,000, double the Albuquerque average. Many new houses were built in the hugely popular Revivalist styles, such as Mediterranean, Spanish Colonial, and Spanish-Pueblo Revival.

The "Great Annexation" immediately spurred rampant land speculation on the East Mesa and elsewhere. According to the historian Chris Wilson, of the more than one-hundred subdivision plats filed between 1900 and 1940, over eighty-five were filed in the 1920s and most of those after 1925. Although several large additions were immediately developed, such as Monte Vista, and Parkland Hills, the majority of them sat undeveloped until the housing boom following the Second World War.

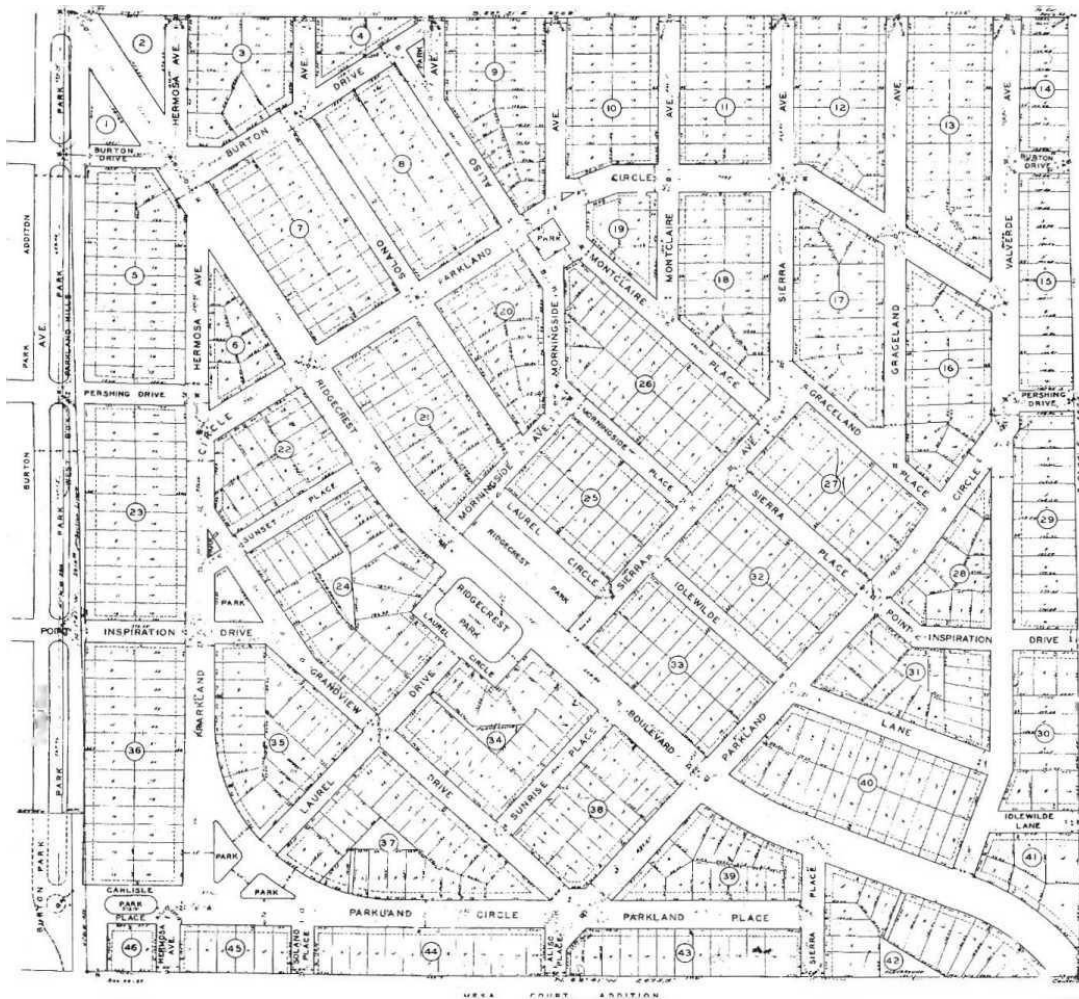
As existing East Mesa lots began to fill up, for example, the University Heights Addition added 300 houses in the 1920s, developers such as D. K. B. Sellers began expanding eastward and, in contrast to earlier lot sales, Sellers began setting minimum square footage requirements, designating acceptable building materials, the number of structures on the lot, and even the minimum house cost, in other words, covenants. The practice of issuing covenants for individual subdivisions soon became commonplace. Unfortunately, these restrictions on property expanded to include restrictions on who could live in these subdivisions, as clauses on race and ethnicity were added. Racial covenants were enforced until Federal housing laws were enacted some thirty years later made them null and void.

At the same time, the city implemented new rigorous building permit requirements that raised the cost of permits and required submittal of floor plans and elevations. Thus, suburban house construction became more standardized. Even today, a visitor to these early subdivisions can see the physical differences between pre and post-1920 development.

As developers moved their construction eastward, they encountered rougher terrain with more undulations and deeper drainages that created design challenges. In the Monte Vista Addition, for example, located just east of the University of New Mexico, the developer William Leverett, Sr. encountered so many problems with uneven terrain and flooding hazards that he hired the well-known Denver landscape architect, S. R. DeBoer, to help overcome these problems. DeBoer designed a tract that abandoned the standard street grid pattern and instead oriented at odd angles to maximize lot sizes, and aligned streets, such as Campus Blvd., to follow natural drainage patterns. Thus, when it rained hard enough to cause flooding, the water flowed down the streets rather than over yards and into basements – much to the delight of the neighborhood's children.

The Monte Vista Addition was unique for its use of the natural terrain to guide the layout of streets and house lots. Nearby, the Parkland Hills Addition, also platted 1926, is located along Ridgecrest Dr. south of Central and east of Carlisle and was developed using ideas of subdivision development that date back to the mid-nineteenth century – the City Beautiful Movement – featuring oversized lots oriented forty-five degrees from the north intersected by curvilinear streets that offered interesting views of the Sandia Mountains.

Parkland Hills was developed by a consortium of local citizens who, after seeing the Monte Vista development, hired S. R. DeBoer to layout their subdivision. The oldest part of the development, lying southwest of the main thoroughfare Ridgecrest Dr., is organized on a diagonal axis, Laurel Drive, with Ridgecrest Park terminating the central axis. The diagonal Ridgecrest Drive and the north-to-south Carlisle Boulevard, a main arterial route, both feature landscaped medians. The diagonal axis is accentuated by the ninety-degree curve of Parkland Circle in southwest corner of the neighborhood. Several small parks are located throughout the



Original Plat Map of Parkland Hills Addition. Note mixture of curvilinear and gridded streets denoting different development periods.

neighborhood, centered around two larger ones, Ridgecrest Park and Laurel Park that straddle Ridgecrest Dr. It is around this area that most early homes were built beginning in 1927.

Although, the subdivision got off to a slow start, many of the homes were custom built by notable architects and builders of the day. Interestingly, the northeast section of the plat was laid out in the traditional north-south grid pattern. This section was not developed until after the war and is characterized by much simpler, smaller homes.



## New Housing Styles

As noted earlier, a limited number of new styles related to the Revivalist Movement began appearing in Albuquerque in the first decades of the twentieth century. The popularity of this grew exponentially in the 1920s.

**Mediterranean / Mission Revival (1910-1950)** In the 1920s and 30s, the Mediterranean Revival style was arguably the most popular style in Albuquerque. This style can be found block after block, in addition after addition throughout the city. The style is highlighted by red tile roofs and light colored stuccoed walls. Notable characteristics include round-arched openings or picturesque grouping of windows. Often tile is restricted to porches or parapets which front otherwise flat roofs. Wrought iron details are not uncommon.



600 block Ridgecrest Dr. 1929

The Mission style shares the Mediterranean style features but is distinguished from it by the presence of curvilinear parapets, square towers, and projecting eaves with exposed rafters.

Fruit Ave. NW in the Perea Addition. 1925





Rare 1929 photo of a just-finished home on Parkland Hills Dr.

**Spanish-Pueblo Revival (1905-1950s)** The Spanish-Pueblo Revival Style is named for the two cultures which contributed to its development. Original versions of this style, still being built in the end of the 19th Century, particularly in Pueblos and Hispanic villages, were models for the revival style. So successful was the revival of the Spanish-Pueblo Style, it continues to be one



Perea Addition, 1920

of the most popular styles constructed in Albuquerque today.

This style is characterized by one-story construction with a flat roof and low, rounded parapet walls with projecting *vigas* (roof beams). Exposed wood headers highlight the doors and windows. *Portals* (porches) often run the width of the façade and are supported rough-hewn logs with decorative *corbel* brackets or *zapatas* (post capitals). Roof drainage is carried by *canales*

(scuppers). Corner fireplaces (kiva style) are almost always present.





Parkland Hills, 1937

While the “high” style of this building type utilizes all these features, plus others, the popularity of this style has led builders duplicate it without all the “bells and whistles” but retaining a basic form and some basic features, such as *faux vigas*, essentially pieces of pine logs stuck onto the



side of the house. Over time, these imitations tend to rot out and are stuccoed over rather than replaced. Some historians refer to these houses as **Simplified Spanish-Pueblo Revival** or simply **Pueblo Style**.

An example of a modestly priced home in the Simplified Spanish-Pueblo Revival style, also called Pueblo Style.

**Southwest Vernacular (1920-Present)** The Southwest Vernacular style is an amalgam of popular revivalist styles combined at the whim of the builder or owner. Its main feature is a distinctive parapet, which can top a simple flat-roofed, stuccoed cube.

Or it can combine features from Spanish-Pueblo Revival or Mediterranean Revival, with features such as, projecting *vigas*, roof tiles, and cut-out porch openings.



### **GAAR & Real Estate Marketing Innovations During the 1920s**

On July 11, 1921, the National Association of Real Estate Boards officially recognized and approved the application of the Albuquerque Real Estate Board (now GAAR) to join the National Association. Founded on May 12, 1908 in Chicago as the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges, the association had 120 founding members, 19 Boards, and one state association. Its stated objective was "to unite the real estate men of America for the purpose of effectively exerting a combined influence upon matters affecting real estate interests."

In 1916, the Exchange's name was change to The National Association of Real Estate Boards and the term, "REALTOR" was adopted signifying that its members were real estate professionals who subscribed to the association's strict Code of Ethics.

**REALTOR**

In 1972, the name of the National Association of Real Estate Boards was changed to the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR). The block "R" logo was adopted by the Association in 1973.

On April 24, 1921, the *National Real Estate Journal* published a list of twenty Albuquerque Realtors who had joined the local board. Its first president was Hal Franklin. Most of these founding GAAR members had their offices on or near Gold Ave. in the heart of downtown. Gold Ave. was locally known as, “The Wall Street of Albuquerque.”



Five individuals served as president during GAAR’s first decade of operation. Franklin served for four years (1921-1924), while R. J. McCanna served for two (1925-1926). The following presidents served one year each: Rollin Guthridge, Kenneth D. Balcomb, and Charles E. McDuffie. McCanna, Balcomb, and McDuffie were members of *Who’s Who* of local real estate developers in the late 1920s. They were individually or as part of a consortium responsible for the development of the Reynold’s Addition (McCanna), the Parkland Hills Addition (Balcomb), and the College View Addition (McDuffie, whose best-known work as a builder/developer took place in the 1930s).

While GAAR began to professionalize the real estate business, marketing strategies started to evolve from simple notices in the local newspapers’ Want Ads sections to elaborate weekend-long celebrations with giveaways to prospective buyers. Perhaps the most innovative and spectacular events took place in Parkland Hills between 1926 and 1929.

In the late 1920s, housing developers on the East Mesa faced stiff competition to sell their lots. New additions, such Monte Vista and College View as well as older tracts such as, the Terrace Addition and University Heights, were all trying to attract buyers to the Heights. Although we do not know who developed Parkland Hills’ marketing strategy, that person clearly knew what to do to attract attention, and he was aided by owners of the *Albuquerque Journal* who sent out staff to cover the grand openings of spec homes in the addition. The *Journal* had a weekly section on Real Estate and Housing that ran articles and advertisements for new housing subdivisions and highlighted the work of various builders in the city.

In the summer of 1926, the newspaper announced the opening of Parkland Hills with flashy advertisements appearing daily and “news” articles, which were actually public relations pieces that ran almost weekly extolling the virtues of the new subdivisions.





Perhaps the most ambitious ad campaign was launched a month later, May 27, 1928, when Parkland Hills paid for a double page spread with photographs (below). The ad highlights the subdivision’s features and offers a pledge of customer satisfaction to prospective buyers. The ad also introduced the Parkland Hills salesmen, dressed in typical golf clothes of the era – peaked golf cap, coat and bow tie, plus-fours, and argyle socks. These men would usher prospective buyers around the subdivision showing them the best lots and neighborhood amenities. Their claims were to be believed because as the ad says: “They have open and honest faces” (ironically, the caricatures have no faces).



**PARKLAND HILLS EXPLAINED**  
 Parkland Hills Is a Huge Success! Why?

LET THESE MEN TELL YOU WHY

**AN OPEN LETTER**

**A Pledge**

**See the Parkland Hills Display**  
 PARKLAND HILLS

**Ask About Parkland Hills**  
 PARKLAND HILLS

Albuquerque Journal  
 May 27, 1928



In the advertisement from June 10, 1929, the connection between the *Albuquerque Journal* and Parkland Hills Development Company are highlighted. These ads also show how truly invested the *Journal* was in this development. The newspaper was listed as a sponsor of the subdivision's three main model homes:

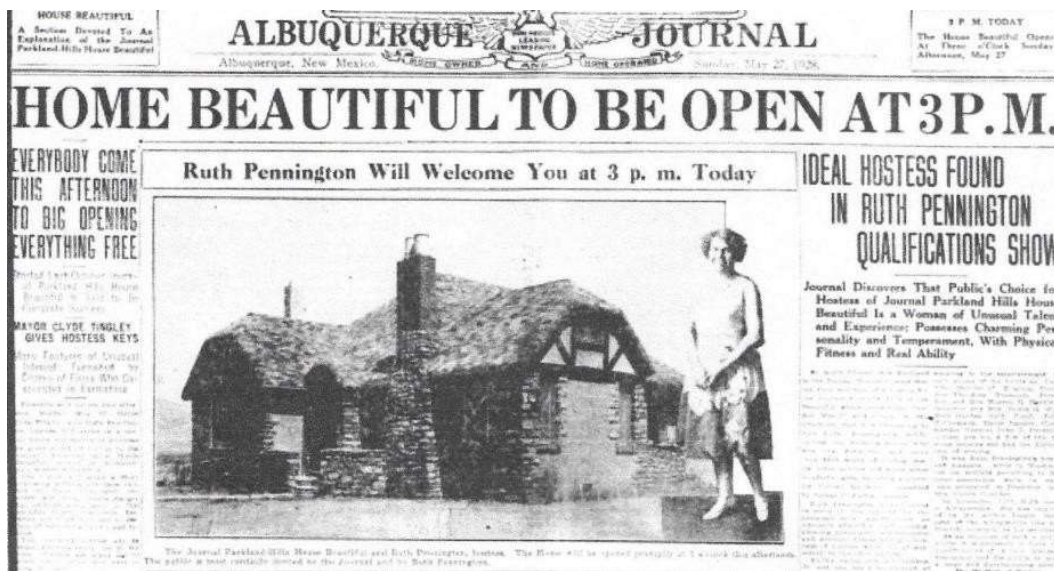
“The Journal Parkland Hills House Beautiful”

“The Journal Parkland Hills House Practical”

“The Journal Parkland Hills Palace Home”

The three houses were designed and built to showcase the latest in building materials, plumbing and modern conveniences such as electric refrigerators. They were fully furnished by local merchants with all the latest appliances that even included food in the cupboards, a fully stocked medicine cabinet in the bathroom, and jewelry on the bedroom dressing table - provided by Fogg Jewelers. The grand openings were gala affairs where people came with their picnic baskets, while others were served tea and MJB coffee from the Liberty Cafe, sugar wafers from Parkland Hills' “official grocer” J. A. Skinner, and ice cream courtesy of the Albuquerque Dairy Association. Music was provided by a brand-new invention - the Orthophonic Victrola phonograph which was set up in each model home.

*Albuquerque Journal* November 28, 1929  
Photo layout of new homes in Parkland Hills



The first open house was held at the Journal Parkland Hills House Beautiful on May 27, 1928, located at 704 Parkland Circle. It was a hugely successful affair with over 4,000 people visiting the home over eight days. The official hostess for the opening was Ruth Pennington, a secretary with the city's Gas & Electric Company, who was selected by the *Journal* and the Parkland Hills company for her "adequate education and training, pleasing personality, and graciousness of manner." All characteristics that made her the "ideal hostess." She was completely outfitted for the occasion by the National Garment Company and the locally prominent Paris Shoe Store - who in *Journal* articles was referred to as the "official footwear" store of the Parkland Hills subdivision.

On the appointed Sunday, at 3 pm sharp, Mayor Clyde Tingley gave a speech and handed the keys to the home to Hostess Pennington who unlocked the front door, and the large crowd began to stream through the home.

The House Beautiful was designed by the well-known architect Albert W. Boehning, Sr., and built by Don Shaffer. It is a distinctive Revival style home, described as an English or Anne Hathaway Cottage style (pictured below in 2018). Constructed of hollow clay tile, its home's



exterior features half-timber and rusticated stone accents on a stucco finish. A large fireplace chimney made of stone and brick dominates the facade. The original roof was copper sheathing with rolled edges to resemble thatching. Today's roof is asphalt

shingles but still has rolled edges to retain its original look. S. R. De Boer himself designed the landscape plan for the house.

In a *Journal* article published in February of 1928, it reported: "the home represents the combined skills of Albuquerque's leading builders and artisans and when completed—will prove to be one of the show places of the Southwest .....It is probably the most carefully constructed home in Albuquerque." In 1980, the house was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



About 6 months later, on November 25, the second spec home, the Journal Parkland Hills House Practical, held an open house - again to large crowds. Over 800 people toured the house. Ms. Virginia Hervey, a dancer who had recently appeared at the Sunshine Theater, opened the doors at 3 pm and she, along with six other young women served as hostesses. The official car for this opening was a Durant sedan - produced by the Durant Motor Corporation of New York City.



Hostesses in front the House Practical and the grand prize, a new Durant sedan.



The 6-room Mediterranean Revival style house, located at 1300 Ridgecrest Dr., was constructed of hollow clay tile with a clay tile roof, with a short tower-like room dominating the facade. The house had a 2-car garage - which was unusual for its day, but it speaks to the type of clientele that the development company was hoping to attract. The home was built by the construction company Berger and Shaffer.

Once again, the house was fully furnished by local merchants and the *Journal* extolled the virtues of the new home, describing all the latest conveniences and many built-ins, including what they described as a “telephone booth” - that little niche usually in the hallway which became so commonplace in 1930s homes.

Today, the home’s exterior appears pretty much the same as it did in 1928. But a large tree obscures the tower the from street view.



The House Practical in 2018



The final spec home touted by the *Journal* and the Parkland Hills development company was the Palace Home, located at 1007 Parkland Circle. The modestly sized, Mediterranean Revival style home is L-shaped with a recessed arched front door. Of course, it featured all the most modern conveniences. The house was also built by Berger and Shaffer.



The Palace House in 2019.

To promote this home, the *Journal* ran a “Queen Contest.” To become Queen, women purchased goods from a couple of dozen select local merchants and for every 10 cents they spent they received one vote. This promotion ran for several months prior to home’s open house with the *Journal* advertising the event almost daily.



**Auburn Sport Sedan  
QUEEN'S  
PRIZE**

**“3 FOR 1” Will Be Given On All Votes  
Cast On or Before May 31**

Votes will count “3 For 1” on the Journal Parkland Hills Palace Home Queen Contest if deposited on or before Midnight, May 31st. This offer positively closes promptly at Midnight, May 31st.

**7 Days  
LEFT  
So Hurry, Hurry**

Only 8 more days are left in which to get votes that count “3 for 1” in the Journal Parkland Hills Palace Home Queen Contest.

Every contestant must bring their votes into the Journal business office and deposit them in the locked steel ballot box before midnight, May 31, if they are to count “3 For 1”

Are you working for yourself in this contest? Do you have all your friends working? Are you working for the

**EACH 10c PURCHASE---1 VOTE  
DEMAND YOUR VOTES**

**WE GIVE  
QUEEN CONTEST  
VOTES**

**Every Purchase Is Worth Money to You Or to Some  
Woman in the Contest  
BE SURE YOU GET VOTES!  
From Each of These Merchants**

ATTENTION: SEE LIST BELOW

Besides being crowned Queen, the contest winner received a brand-new Auburn Sports Sedan – a very expensive automobile in its day. This model was said to be worth \$1,225.00, which was almost double what most cars sold for in the late 1920s. For the record, the Queen of the Palace Home was Lucile Coffey. In addition to the grand prize, 59 other women won a wide variety of prizes.

The mass advertising campaign seen at Parkland Hills in the late 1920s was precedent setting and set the stage for real estate marketing campaigns of the future. The *Albuquerque Journal* still includes large advertising sections on a regular basis.

The era of the 1920s was one of growth and prosperity for the city. However, on October 24, 1929 the stock market crashed, and financial uncertainty swept Albuquerque and the nation. In the next chapter, we will look at how this momentous event affected the city and its housing market.