About the District & the Walk

Vista Larga is forever linked to the UNM North Golf Course. The neighborhood is best known for its 27-hole Municipal Golf Course that opened in 1942, the same year UNM opened its main campus. The course was built to help fund the institution's expansion, and it quickly became a popular destination for UNM students and employees. In the 1950s and 1960s, the course hosted several professional golfing events, including the UNM Men’s Golf Invitational and the UNM Women’s Golf Invitational. Today, the course remains a popular destination for UNM students, faculty, and staff, as well as the wider Albuquerque community.

The Vista Larga Historic District, established in 2016, is viewed as the first Mid-Century Modern Historic District in the state of New Mexico. This neighborhood is located on the northwestern edge of the city, west of the University of New Mexico, and is characterized by its well-preserved collection of mid-century modern residential architecture.

With the district and the Greater Vista Larga Addition, one is at the best of both worlds. Historic neighborhoods and modern architecture coexist in the city. Low-slung Contemporary style homes with flat or low-pitched roofs stand next to classic Ranches, and several adobes grace the landscape.

Many homes were designed and built by architects who also contributed to the city’s modernist movement. These buildings include commercial building projects that created jobs for twenty- to thirty-year-olds. Many of these workers went on to found or co-found businesses, who were major players in the design and development of the neighborhood.

Some architects, who designed Vista Larga residencies, also designed some of the more prominent commercial building projects. For instance, architect Albequerque, Joe McDonald, designed the Corner Foundation Building at First and Main, and the University of New Mexico Foundation Building. In addition, architect Albequerque, Joe McDonald, designed the Corner Foundation Building at First and Main, and the University of New Mexico Foundation Building.

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HISTORIC DISTRICT
MID-CENTURY MODERN
AN ALBUQUERQUE MODERN

Identifying the Architecture

When visiting the historic district, visit the architecture. The neighborhood’s architecture is a reflection of the mid-century modern style.

Ranch: Ranch homes were originally designed in the late 1930s and were influenced by the Prairie School movement. These homes have flat or low-pitched, hipped roof with moderate to wide overhangs. They have a distinct “long-and-low” look. Their floor plans uniquely separate public and private spaces, with a long, narrow shape that is often symmetrical. These homes have large window grouping and expanses of glass, which are typically found in ranch homes.

Contemporary: Contemporary homes are characterized by their modernist design. These homes have large window grouping and expanses of glass, which are typically found in ranch homes. They also have a long, narrow shape that is often symmetrical. These homes are typically found in mid-century modern neighborhoods, such as Vista Larga.

International: These homes are characterized by their International Style. They are typically found in mid-century modern neighborhoods, such as Vista Larga. These homes have large window grouping and expanses of glass, which are typically found in ranch homes. They also have a long, narrow shape that is often symmetrical. These homes are typically found in mid-century modern neighborhoods, such as Vista Larga.

Landscaping is integral to the neighborhood. The ponderosa, piñon, and Arizona Cyprus used in much of the original landscaping are not native to the area. Today, the fairways are graced by mature cottonwoods and elms, and the rolling hills of the subdivision by 70-year-old pine and deciduous trees. Although many of the trees, adobe construction used in several of the homes, and a window wall often found in the back of the home but sometimes in the front. These homes have large window grouping and expanses of glass, which are typically found in ranch homes.

The Vista Larga Historic District is located in the UNM North Golf Course. The neighborhood is best known for its 27-hole Municipal Golf Course, which is now owned by the University of New Mexico. The course is nestled among the sand hills, and the homes, adobe construction used in several of the homes, and a window wall often found in the back of the home but sometimes in the front. These homes have large window grouping and expanses of glass, which are typically found in ranch homes.

In the 1940s, there were only five architects in the city, and an attorney who designed the City-County Office Building at Fifth and Marquette. In 1947, there were twenty-two new architects. Many of them registered with the NM chapter of the American Institute of Architects. However, by the mid-1950s, the city’s booming population resulted in a multitude of new residential and commercial building projects. The city’s architectural movement was influenced by the Mid-Century Modern style, which emphasized the use of glass, steel, and concrete to create sleek, functional buildings.

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Loop Tours of Vista Larga Historic District

Please request the permission of the people who live in the historic district. The walk can be accessed and left at any location, but be aware of parking restrictions in some locations. The Eastern Loop.

1. Take the Eastern Loop by starting on Vista Larga Avenue, between 15th and 16th, and head south. As you round the curve you'll find a good example of a directly contrast to the International up the hill. The first house on the tour is the last house built during the district's boom. In 1954, the home's wide ashlar-faced chimney, corners and a flat roof, hallmarks of the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style. This home, designed by Max Flatow.

2. Continue north on Harvard Drive noting 1601 and 1606, Cornell. They are built low in simplified forms mostly with two street facades. A broad chimney caps the hip-box roof. What classic Ranch features do you recognize? Keep walking west around the curves and corners of the street. As you round the curve you'll find a good example of a modern Ranch.

3. Walk up the street past the cornet to 1518 Cornell. This is a mid-century style, this home's gambrel roof and decorative shutters are in keeping with the street curves and corners. Many have elaborate exposed post-and-beam gravel-surfaced roof with a clerestory at the side.

4. At the home's entrance, two nice Ranches. Then turn right onto Cornell Drive.

5. The Eastern Loop ends and there is a second entrance to the walking trail. Stop here to soak in the feel of a neighborhood where some families have spent two and even three generations. Some families have spent two and even three generations.

The Western Loop.

1. Take a right on Vista Larga. This house-on-embankment drive of Slopes Drive is classic and provides wide views and beautiful landscaping. As you round the curve you'll find a good example of a classic Ranch by Bryan designed this Contemporary as his family home in 1953. Its classic Ranch features do you recognize?