



TOURS . EVENTS . MODERNISM

October has been a busy month for our team and we'd like to thank everyone who made it possible. From **Basement Films**, the **Albuquerque Museum**, **Historic Albuquerque Inc.**, the **Albuquerque Historical Society**, **Bruce Caird Realty**, CHED Designs, **Field & Frame**, the Albuquerque Main Public Library, and the **Guild Cinema** who together made Home Movie Day a reality, to the attendees of our final few Retrograde Tours.

Also, our sincere thanks to everyone who clicked on and completed the reader poll we conducted earlier this month. We're laying the foundation for a new Modern Albuquerque and are a better organization with your feedback and input!

-Thea Haver



THE MYSTERY OF 'HAUNTED HOMES'



It reads like a neighborhood named from a mid-century comic. We first heard of Haunted Homes from an Instagram follower familiar with KayLynn Deveney's photograph-filled book, 'All You Can Lose Is Your Heart.' Located in the Mesa Village addition, the Haunted Homes development is a historical oddity. It's a neighborhood platted by Dale Bellamah, bounded by Constitution to the north and Wyoming to the east. Walking south on Moon from Bellehaven, some of the concrete

is stamped 'Dale Bellamah Homes.' But if you continue east, Moon becomes Sellers and you're greeted by stylized storybook ranches. The stamps are gone.



A Dale Bellamah Homes stamp flanking the driveway of a home in the Bellehaven neighborhood.

Northeast of Grant Middle School is a small pocket of ranch homes bearing storybook characteristics. Some even retain their original wood shake shingle roofs. These are not Dale Bellamah Homes, they are Haunted Homes, the name of a company operated by Ralph Brutsche. An advertisement printed in 1959 touts '6 Different Models' of 'Albuquerque's Original Story-Book Homes' each which featured 'hand split Canadian shake shingle roofs.' The development was advertised as being on Constitution, 8 blocks east of Wyoming. 'Living With A Spirit,' the company's slogan, graces the ad with a Casper-like ghost holding a saw and two wood planks.

From family ties, we knew of a connection from Brutsche to Bellamah. Brutsche had worked on Princess Jeanne Park. Bellamah was regularly reported on in the papers and such publicity also followed his associates and family, some of whom worked for his companies. It's from those articles that we learned Brutsche was Jeanne Lees Bellamah's adopted brother. Dale himself attended Brutsche as best man at his first wedding in February 1958, a year prior to the opening of Bellehaven, the development immediately to the north of Constitution where Dale and 'Princess' Jeanne would personally reside. We speculate that the lots in Mesa Village may have been a wedding gift, though we've yet to confirm it. Brutsche was then working as a builder in Santa Fe.

But where did the name come from? In a 1955 article, Bellamah joked that the "ghost of Mesa Village" had returned to haunt officials again. The article went on to state that what was haunting city officials was a promise the city made to provide free utilities when it sold the land. The cost of installing the utilities would eventually exceed the price the city received for the subdivision. Did this quip inspire Brutsche's company name? Curiously, Haunted Homes also operated in Santa Fe and Deming. Its origins, whatever they are, may be lost to time. Brutsche passed away before we could interview him.

Storybook ranches are not modernist but are categorized as part of the modern movement. They were nationally popular in the 1950s and can be found around Albuquerque in areas including, most famously, Bellamah's Princess Jeanne Park and Bellehaven, where the design was elevated by the firm L.C. Major & Associates (best known for their work on the Racquet Club Estates in Palm Springs, California).

VISTA LARGA NEIGHBORHOOD RELEASES WALKING GUIDE

Vista Larga, Albuquerque's first mid-century modern residential historic district, has just released another

educational product. The Vista Larga Walking Tour map draws from the neighborhood's **previously printed guide** and **historic register nomination** for a self-guided experience. The 32-site tour highlights some of the contemporary, International-style and ranch homes in the neighborhood, all of which can be seen from the streets and sidewalks. Some properties are identified by the names of their designers. Architects Max Flatow, Lawrence Garcia, and William Ellison may be recognizable to our readers for their contributions to the commercial mid-century landscape.



The guide was prepared by Tom Drake, Cara McCulloch, Diane Scena, and William Dodge with funding provided by the City of Albuquerque's Urban Enhancement Trust Fund and the New Mexico Architectural Foundation. Additional support was provided by the Albuquerque Historical Society.

[DOWNLOAD YOUR COPY](#)

UPCOMING FREE EVENT: NOVEMBER 9TH



Join us for **Making Change: The Albuquerque Civic Auditorium** at 10:30 AM in Botts Hall at the city's Special Collections Library.

Praised by Frank Lloyd Wright. Visited by Nixon and Kennedy. Where Jimi Hendrix performed 3 months before his death. Designed by architects Ferguson, Stevens & Associates, the Albuquerque Civic Auditorium stood from 1957 until 1986. In this

presentation from Director of Modern Albuquerque, Thea Haver, uncover how the auditorium went from celebrated to "unloved", as the Tribune described it on the day its dome was demolished. Featuring rarely seen early renderings and media, this talk focuses on the architectural history of the much-missed landmark, while also entertaining its cultural impact, declining relevance, and near-preservation.

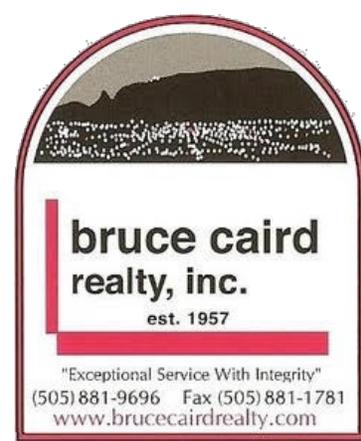
This free presentation is the culmination of *The Perfect Building* project and will be recorded for upload to streaming services in December. *Postcard from the Nancy Tucker Collection.*



SPECIAL THANKS TO BRUCE CAIRD REALTY

Bruce Caird's name is remembered by many in the Duke City. Known by his friends as 'Mr. Albuquerque,' Caird got his start in property as a construction superintendent on Dale Bellamah's Princess Jeanne Park development. Caird went from building property to marketing it, and then to real estate, finding an innate talent for selling homes. "He could sell things he believed in," son Ian Caird explains. "And he believed in the value of owning real property, of home ownership."

Caird received his realtor's license in 1957, becoming just the ninth person in the state to receive what would eventually become a required credential in the profession. Partnering with Ed Norris, whom he met while working as a leasing agent for the newly opened Winrock Shopping Center, he opened Caird-Norris Realty. Both men would eventually open their own offices; Bruce Caird Realty continues to operate today and recently sponsored Home Movie Day.



Among the homes built in the first phase of Princess Jeanne Park construction was this one on Ralph Court. When we photographed it last winter, we did not know that Bruce Caird and his family had moved into it after its completion in 1954. Ralph Brutsche and Bruce Caird met while working on the project and became lifelong friends.

Caird's values live on in his two children, Ian and Kim, who themselves found a talent for moving people towards their goal of home ownership and took over the business, working with their father until his death. Today, they continue to share the benefit of their lifetime of experience with clients and new brokers, David Pruitt and Robert Montoya. The company defines its real estate philosophy as caring for their clients needs and property as if they were their own. "Solutions for people in real estate. That's what we provide," says Ian Caird, who was licensed as a realtor at age 18 in 1972 and joined the family business the following year. Asked why she stayed in the field for more than 30 years, Kim explained that she enjoys the relationship aspect of residential real estate; assisting multiple generations of the same family in achieving milestones is especially gratifying. Ian added that he is also fulfilled by the sense of service and deep engagement that comes with working with clients on such an important purchase. "And working with good people makes it fun."

Visit Bruce Caird Realty online at: www.brucecairdrealty.com

FOLLOW US

