

MetroABQ Real Estate Newsletter



Including Rio Rancho, Corrales, Placitas, Atrisco Valley, Los Lunas & the East Mountains.

:June:

**Downtown's "Neon Park" at Glorieta Station
The Historic South Western Ice Company Building**

&

Fabulous MetroABQ Vintage Street Photography Exhibition



The South Western Brewery & Ice Company Building

Sitting at my new favorite Downtown coffee house, [Villa Myriam](#), or [VM Coffee](#), it's hard to ignore the adjacent scene: on the lot to the north is a large five-story brick building, standing by itself along the railroad tracks. It is pretty impressive: decorated with wonderful diamond-ribbon brickwork, arched brick lintels & numerous vertical brick columns that frame the building, plus a fifth-story balcony city view. Built in 1899, the historic building originally housed the South West Brewery & Ice Company. It's a prominent neighbor in an oft-overlooked section by the tracks, a block south of Lomas & a block east of Broadway; plus, it's one of the only surviving 19th-century commercial buildings found Downtown.

By the start of the 20th century it was one of the MetroABQ's largest employers & its crown jewel was Glorieta Beer, shipped throughout the southwest. The statewide enactment of Prohibition in 1917 forced the company out of the beer business, but its ice-making operations remained & the facility continued to produce ice for most of the 20th century. It finally closed in 1997. Most of the information about [The Brewery Structure at 601 North Commercial St, Albuquerque, NM](#), comes from a pre-prohibition website...

The SW Brewery & Ice Company attained [historic status](#) in the 1970's. Historic status doesn't provide any protections against a tear-down of the building, though. It was recently sold & instead of tearing it down, the new owners, see ["Neon Park"](#) below, are creating a retail space called Glorieta Station, with shops & eateries in the area around John St & Roma Ave NE. They plan to keep the old ice company intact, perhaps turning it back into a brewery.

Above, a recent photograph of the SW Ice Company building from the south side, taken from on the railroad tracks. Just below is a vintage 1915 image of the full brewery on the half-acre lot, taken from the north side, producing beer & ice full-steam with all buildings intact. The image is from the [ABQ Museum Digital Collection](#), & stored at the UNM Libraries [New Mexico Digital Collection](#), a stunningly extensive digital archive, featuring everything New Mexico.

More images & details about the historic [SW Brewery & Ice Company building](#)...



Glorieta Station's "Neon Park"

As your gaze drifts from the historic brick building that produced ice non-stop for almost 100 years, above, you might suddenly notice the jumble of neon signs, below.

In an empty lot on the east side of the SW Ice Company building, are dozens of vintage neon street signs piled around each other seemingly at random. Many are broken-down, their glass tubes shattered & paint flaking from the frames, while others are in good condition, with sometimes fresh paint & replaced neon, recently refurbished.

Left behind from another era & dating back almost 90 years, many of the signs were iconic [Mother Road/Route 66](#) neon business markers, drawing folks into the motels, diners or retail shops from the 1930's onward. Judging by the battered conditions of some of them, many of the signs will now see better days...



The well-known Maloof family owned the South West Brewery & Ice Company building for the last couple of decades, until recently, when they sold it to the Garcia family, local owners of several car dealerships in the Metro. The Garcia's already owned the five lots adjacent to the SW Ice Building...including the SW Ice Building into their new east railroad retail center makes sense. I applaud infill, & appreciate local business people bringing economic activity to a run-down area bordering the railroad tracks. They are calling the area "Neon Park."

Below is a short list from Route66News.com of the neon signs known to be collected

by the Garcia family, on the "Neon Park" site; there are at least a dozen more there than on the list...

- Jack's Liquor Store, Albuquerque
- Kurt's Camera Corral, Albuquerque
- Oden Chevrolet, Albuquerque
- Ponderosa RV Park, Albuquerque
- Cavalier Motel, Albuquerque
- Cactus RV Park, Tucumcari
- Cafe, Santa Rosa
- Sahara Lounge, Santa Rosa
- Franciscan Lodge, Grants
- Grants Cafe, Grants

From the all-things Route66.com website: "Glorieta Station isn't all just antique signs. It also contains classic cars & trucks, antique tractors, midget race cars, old gas pumps & other types of signs."

The recently acquired Monroe's sign is a nice addition. I appreciate that folks like the Garcia's are collecting the sometimes dilapidated & often discarded neon signs. Without them, many remaining signs will be lost to landfills or destroyed. Restoring the signs & creating an area for the public to enjoy & learn about them seems to be a reasonable alternative, to watching them continue to disintegrate or disappear out-of-state.

I'm glad that the MetroABQ Route 66 neon heritage is being kept alive through many avenues, & especially in a hip & newly attractive corner of Downtown, right along the Central Ave/Route 66/Mother Road corridor. Read [a bit more here...](#)





[Let The Sunshine In](#)
The MetroABQ Fifty Years Ago

Photographic images by Walter McDonald; from 1968-1972, curated from the Albuquerque Museum [Photography Collection](#) site.

A fantastic vintage street photography show is at the [ABQ Museum](#), which is (momentarily) closed. The show is an edited selection of a much larger archive

of images from the late 1960's Dawn-of-Aquarius age, commissioned by the museum. Luckily, though we may not see the actual images up close, an archive of the show is [online](#), along with 1500+ other images taken then. The images, mostly taken by former ABQ Tribune photographer Walter McDonald, are shot in 35mm slides & represent the later part of the 1960's into the early 1970's.

His fifty-year-old slides will take you on city-wide adventures.

The images include sweet & colorful Downtown people scenes; fabulous architecture images from Huning Highlands, the Downtown Neighborhoods & beyond; snow-covered Sandia Crest images, to images of the Big-I from a helicopter, just below. A few other photographers also contribute to the extensive archive. It's worth an afternoon viewing them on-line, & when the ABQ Museum reopens, hopefully the exhibition is still there--the images will be even more fantastic up close...

Above is a sampling of Photographer Walter McDonald's people-centric scenes, mostly taken in 1969 around Downtown Albuquerque. I love the now vintage clothing styles & fashion choices. Clearly McDonald took his photos in seasons other than the summer--many of his subjects are dressed in light jackets & long sleeves. Click on the montage to access each full-size image, or [click here for these & more people images](#).

All 1500+ vintage images are at the [ABQ Museum photographic archive](#).



I love the above image from the exhibition [Woman Walks Past Entrance to 314 Gold Ave SW](#). The arch is a great feature & she's in motion, blurred as she crosses the

scene.

I've always appreciated the [Mauger Mansion](#), at 701 Roma Ave NW in the [Fourth Ward Historic District](#) Downtown. The three-story ~3800sqft home, built in 1897 for a small family from the east, is currently an Inn/Airbnb. So it was great to notice an image from the McDonald Exhibit of 701 Roma Ave NW, below. The [Mauger Mansion](#) from 1969 sports a screen-enclosed front porch & young front yard vegetation. Below that is a (recent...) 2018 photograph from the listing when it was for sale, with the porch opened & with mature landscaping--how times have changed.

A '[faux vintage](#)' [image of the mansion](#) at 701 Roma Ave NW is here.



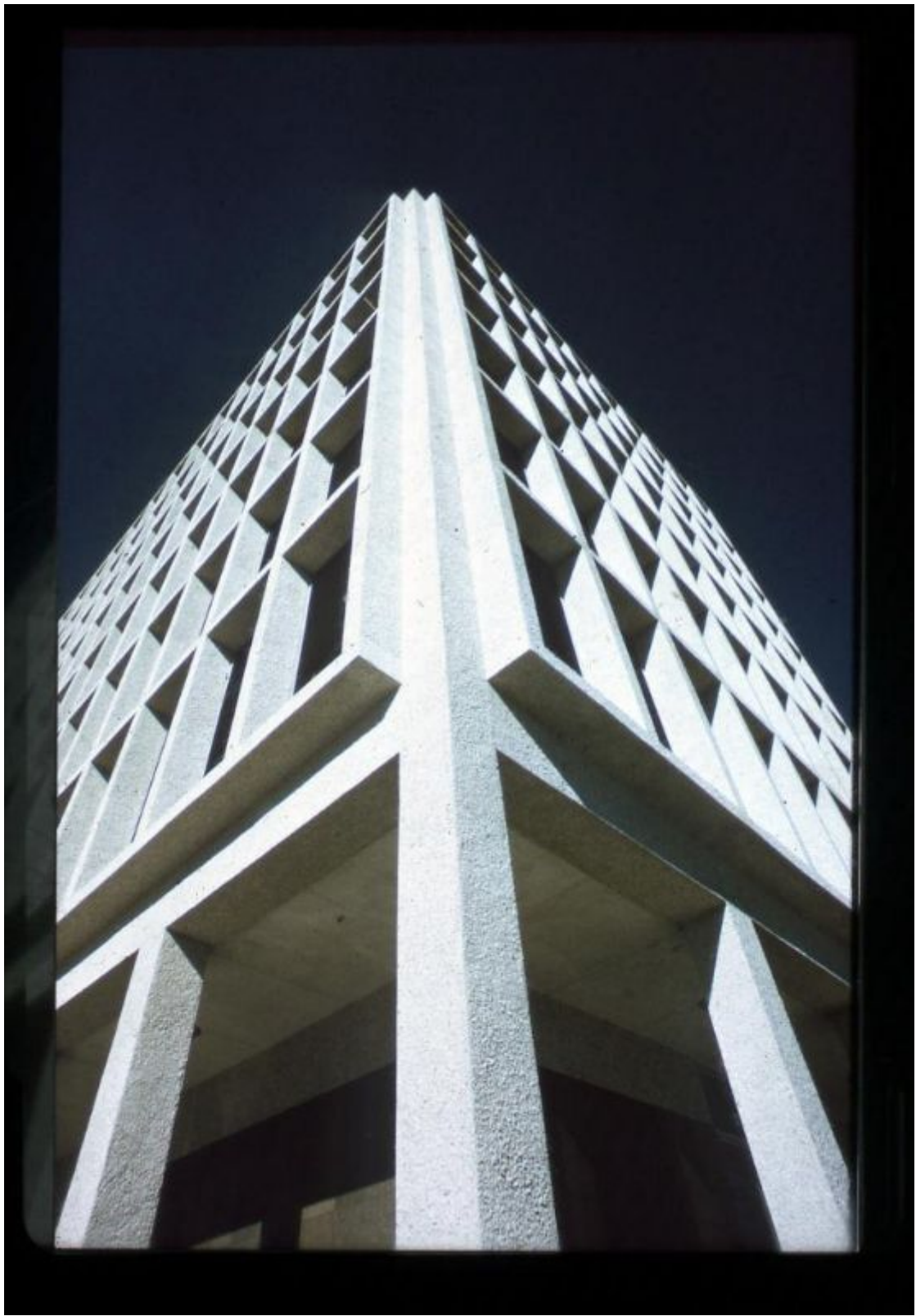


Many of the McDonald images in the collection feature great architectural details that are easy to miss, & great to see here. Decorative gables from residential [Victorian](#) or Arts-&-Crafts style homes are featured, often found in the historic [Huning Highlands](#), [Downtown's Fourth Ward](#) & [Eighth & Forrester](#) Historic Districts. He also loved to photograph building arches & other interesting architectural features, below.











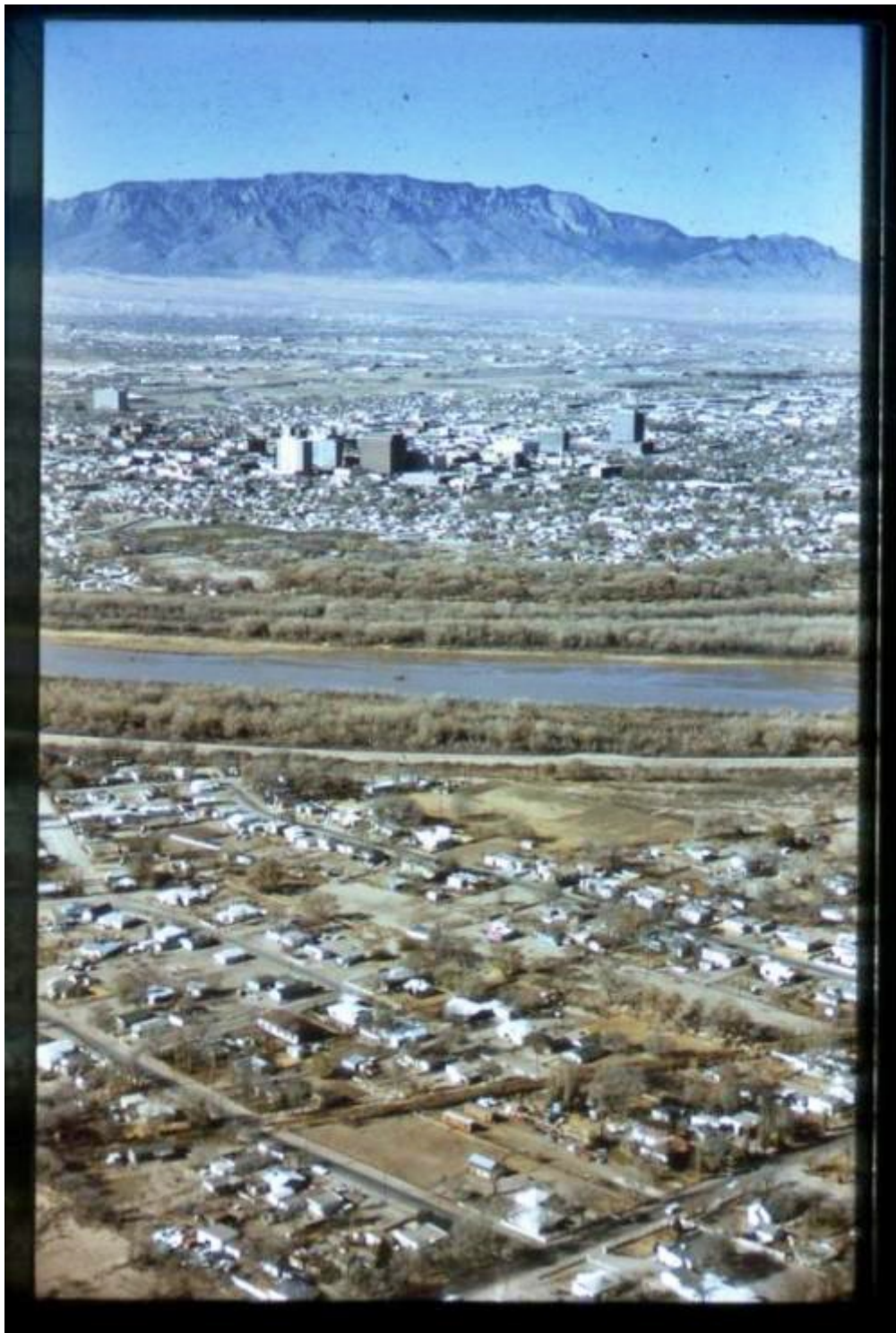
Other architectural features from McDonald's photographs include a lot of Mid-Century commercial buildings, like the two above, from the archive.

McDonald liked to photograph images from helicopter-height, so great images of the young Big-I overpass are a unique sight, seen below from the archive, with other aerial images, like an apartment complex with pool.

The final photographic slide is an aerial scene of the MetroABQ Downtown in 1969, probably taken high up from Pat Hurley Park on the West Side, or from a helicopter,

one of his favorite places to photograph.





All the photographic slides (thick black borders) are property of the [ABQ Museum](#). Unless otherwise indicated, all other photos by Chris Lucas.

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