

Appendix A



A Characterization of Historic Properties along Bridge Boulevard from the Rio Grande to Coors Boulevard

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Bernalillo County, New Mexico



**FINAL
APRIL 2012**

**A Characterization of Historic Properties along Bridge Boulevard
from the Rio Grande to Coors Boulevard**

Bernalillo County, New Mexico

Prepared for
HDR Engineering



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Project Introduction

Under contract with HDR Engineering, Van Citters: Historic Preservation LLC (VCHP) conducted a limited examination of historic neighborhoods, buildings, and cultural landscapes that may affect future planning and design decisions by Bernalillo County on the Bridge Boulevard Corridor (Figure 1). The level of effort for this is best described as a “characterization” of the historic resources found within the study area. It entailed a Class I file search for archaeological resources previously surveyed and a one-day “windshield survey” of the neighborhoods and adjacent commercial, industrial, and agricultural areas within the project boundaries; it relied on secondary sources for the development of a brief historic context for the buildings and landscapes. This project did not include a formal, block by block architectural and historic property survey, and no attempt was made to identify or evaluate any properties for their eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or for the State Register of Cultural Properties. Historical Sanborn Maps of the area are included in Appendix A.



Figure 1: Project Location Map

Source: Google Earth image

The goals of the project were to:

1. Provide a brief history and characterize the historical and architectural elements, as well as cultural landscapes, of traditionally defined neighborhoods and non-residential areas within the project boundaries;
2. Identify any historic districts, buildings, or structures previously listed on the state and national historic registers; and
3. Summarize the findings of this survey with regard to Bernalillo County planning interests.

Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization

The project boundaries for this study were identified by HDR Engineering and Bernalillo County, and included one lot on each side (north and south). The study corridor is 2.7 miles long, from Coors Boulevard on the west to Barelás Bridge on the east. Between Coors Boulevard and Old Coors Drive, the corridor follows the Tower Road alignment. A search of the New Mexico Cultural Resource Information System was completed and there were no documented archaeological resources along the corridor. The results of this search are in Appendix B.

To facilitate the goals of this project, the study area has been divided into sections that reflect the types of resources that can be found on the Bridge Boulevard Corridor. The primary cluster of resources most likely to be of historical interest is just west of the bridge across the Rio Grande. Most of the properties that are of potential historical interest are associated with auto-oriented commercial development, there is one building near Five Points that served as a church, and a number of vernacular residential buildings scattered along the corridor. Most of the residential buildings appear to lack historic integrity or were constructed fairly recently. In addition to the buildings, there are a number of potentially important landscape features including historic roads, an intersection, and *acequias*. These potential historic resources should be taken into consideration by Bernalillo County planners and design engineers as action alternatives are being developed.

General History

This project is within the boundaries of the original 1692 Atrisco land grant, a relatively intact Spanish colonial grant that is one of the few that has been continuously owned by the original settlers and their heirs. Because of the longevity of the land grant, the Atrisco area has over 300 years of Hispanic heritage. The original Atrisco settlers established certain functional areas within the land grant: 1) Ranchos de Atrisco in the Rio Grande valley, which contained individually owned grants and the village proper; 2) agricultural lands used to cultivate corn, beans, wheat, and alfalfa; and 3) common land on the west mesa for free grazing of sheep and other livestock. From 1692 until the early 1900s, Atrisco was a close-knit, self-sufficient community (www.newmexicohistory.org).

After 1900, the practices of irrigated agriculture, free grazing, and trade with Mexico began to change and decline in the Atrisco area. Changes were accelerated by the introduction of the railroad, urban growth of Albuquerque, governmental land- and water-management efforts (such as the establishment of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District [MRGCD]), and homesteading and fencing. In addition, as Albuquerque grew there were new opportunities for employment that attracted people away from rural agricultural areas such as Atrisco and into the city. The last extensive grazing of sheep on the common lands of Atrisco occurred during the Great Depression of the 1930s, although a number of land grant heirs and new immigrants to the South Valley continued to operate small irrigated farms in the area for some time thereafter (www.newmexicohistory.org).



Figure 2: Post 1900 sheep and truck farm in the South Valley.

Source: 1) The Albuquerque Museum, Alabama Milner collection; 2) Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, ZIM CSWR Pict Colls PICT 2002-020, Nicholas P. Ciotola Italians in Albuquerque Pictorial Collection, 1884-1970.

During the 1920s, the Atrisco land grant began to allow sale of portions of the land for commercial development. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s the land-grant trustees (and courts) struggled with how to deal with commercial sale of land and equitable division of proceeds to land-grant heirs. The sale of land-grant lands to developers and outside commercial interests represented a large shift from a subsistence economy to modern capitalism. This shift was

Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization

reflected in the cultural landscape of the South Valley and involved the alteration of historic agricultural patterns along with the encroachment of commercial and modern suburban development (www.newmexicohistory.org).

While Atrisco was established in 1692, its neighboring communities, Villa de Albuquerque and Barelás, were established years later, in 1706 and 1707, respectively. In addition to their agricultural and livestock base, these communities had ties to the Chihuahua-New Mexico trade that occurred on the Camino Real Tierra de Adentro (Camino Real), the main Spanish trade route through New Mexico (www.newmexicohistory.org). The earliest river crossings on the Camino Real were accomplished by fording the narrowest and shallowest points along the river. The site of one critical crossing was in Barelás, most likely near the location of our current bridge. The crossing was described by Zebulon Pike in 1807 as being "400 yards wide, but not more than three feet deep and excellent fording" (Lucero 2007; Couse 1987).

Although the river had been crossed since the earliest settlements, it was not until 1876 that the first bridge in Albuquerque was constructed. The bridge connected Albuquerque to the northern part of Atrisco, and was a pontoon constructed at the same location as the current Central Avenue bridge. The first permanent bridge opened on December 12, 1882. The permanent bridge was located near the pontoon, and was constructed of wood—the crossing toll was a nickel. Both the wooden bridge and pontoon were destroyed by floods in May 1891. It was not until nearly 20 years later, in 1910, that Albuquerque replaced the wood bridge with the Barelás Bridge, a steel truss structure with a wood roadbed (<http://www.albuqhistoc.org>) (Figure 3). This truss bridge was flooded and rebuilt in 1912, and by 1920 a new concrete structure was constructed adjacent to the steel truss. By the 1950s the truss structure had been removed and only the concrete crossing remained (Figure 4).



Figure 3: Barelás Bridge in 1910.

Source: City of Albuquerque website, historical post card collection, index number S-7

Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization



Figure 4: Historic bridge photographs. 1) 1912 after flood; 2) c. 1940s after the concrete bridge was constructed adjacent to the steel truss; and 3) c. 1950s after the steel truss had been removed, but the piers remained in the river.

Source: 1) Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Cobb Memorial Collection, ZIM CSWR Pict Colls PICT 000-119; 2) National Hispanic Cultural Center, National Hispanic Cultural Center History and Literary Arts Barelás Collection Box 1 Folder 1 Image #547; and 3) National Hispanic Cultural Center, National Hispanic Cultural Center History and Literary Arts Barelás Collection Box 1 Folder 1 Image #550.

From 1910 until 1926, when US 85 was established as a north/south highway running through Albuquerque, the character of the area on the west side of the Rio Grande was rural (Figure 5). In 1925, the Joint Board on Interstate Highways planned US 85 and in late 1926 its routing was finalized and subsequently commissioned by the American Association of State Highway Officials. From 1926 until 1937, Route 66 used portions of US 85 to direct westbound travelers up through Santa Fe and then down through Los Lunas before heading directly west again. As such, there is a portion of Bridge Boulevard that was also designated Route 66 (Figure 6). The



initial routing of US 85 and Route 66 used existing roads and their associated infrastructure, including the Barelás Bridge and a portion of what we now know as Bridge Boulevard. It can be presumed that once the road received the designation of “US 85,” new commercial development began to show up along the corridor (Figure 7 and Figure 8).

Figure 5: 1915 Aerial showing Barelás Bridge and the rural character of the west side of the river.
Source: The Albuquerque Museum

Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization

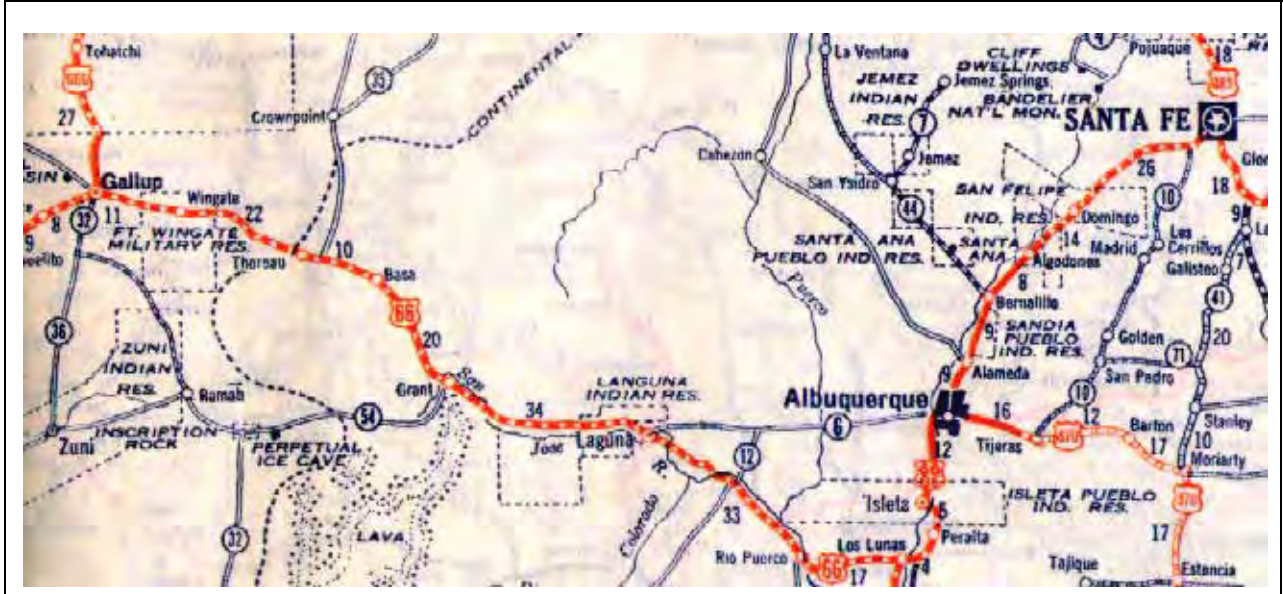


Figure 6: 1928 Rand McNally map of Route 66, showing the road heading south through Albuquerque (and the project area) to Los Lunas and then heading north and west back to Grants and Gallup.
Source: www.us-highways.com

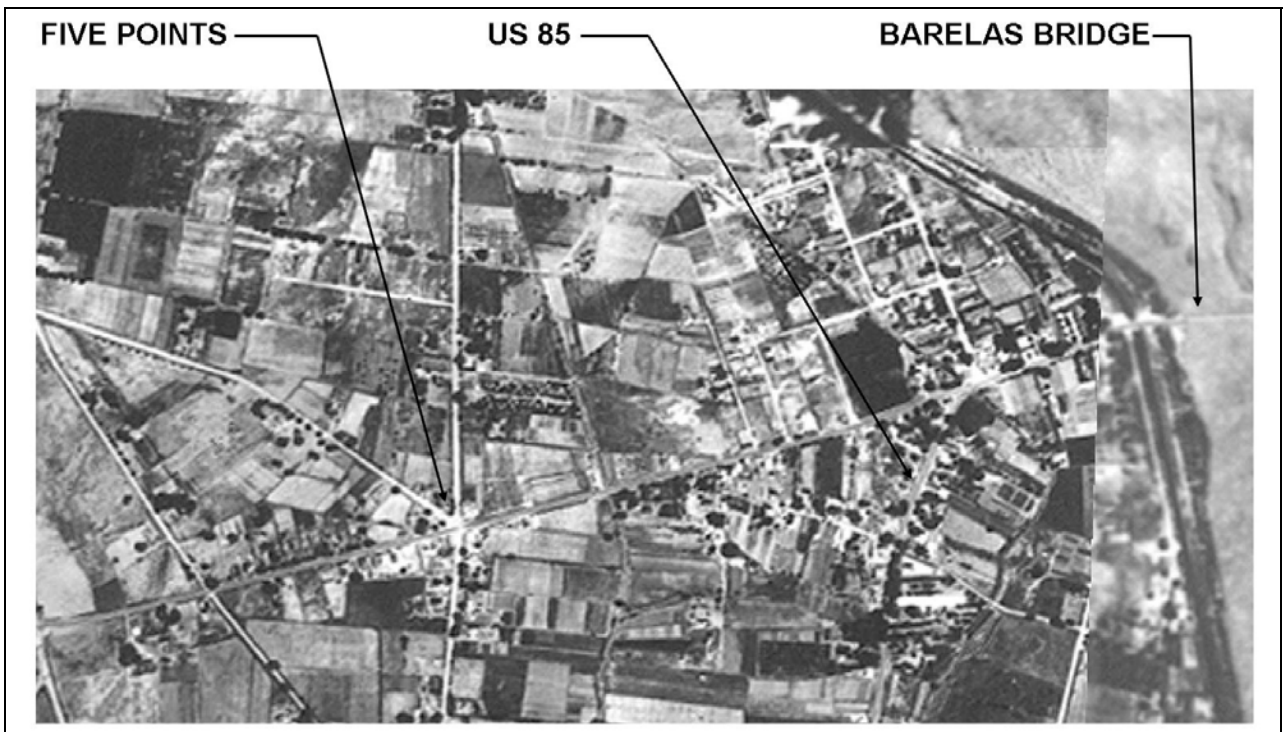


Figure 7: Aerial of Atrisco area in 1935 showing Five Points, agricultural fields, the Atrisco Drain, acequias and development along US 85 and the west abutment of the Barelmas Bridge.
Source: United States Bureau of Reclamation.

Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization

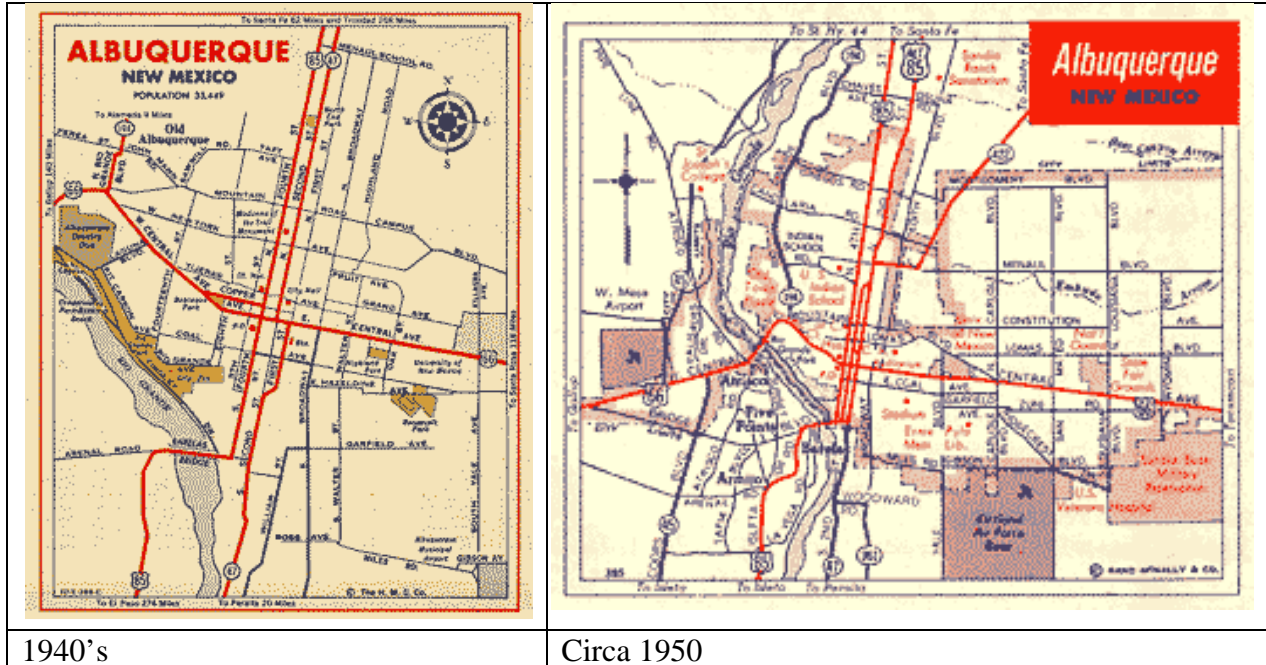


Figure 8: Road maps showing US 85 crossing the Rio Grande and heading south through the Armijo neighborhood. By 1950 the development farther west had become important enough to appear on the map.
Source: www.route66university.com

In addition to the Barelas Bridge and US 85 highway, the works of the MRGCD are important to the Bridge Boulevard project area. By the late 1800s the Rio Grande began to aggrade, which resulted in a rising water table, water logging of agricultural fields, and more extensive damage during seasonal flooding. By 1912, when New Mexico became a state, the issues had come to a head; new solutions were being developed to address the problems, and at the same time there were dramatic changes to the traditional agricultural economy resulting from the development of the railroad and influx of new populations. The need was recognized for a new conservancy district to solve the issues of flooding, regulate stream flow with dams and levees, reclaim land with drains to support the changing agricultural economy, and develop irrigation to provide water to fields with high line canals, laterals, and the updating of *acequia* systems. The state legislature approved the establishment of the MRGCD in 1925. Plans were completed in 1928 and the system was constructed by 1936. The MRGCD project runs from White Rock Canyon in the north to San Marcial in the south.

The Atrisco unit of the MRGCD (the Bridge Boulevard project area is within this unit) is in the Albuquerque Division, which was served by the Angostura Diversion Dam, near Algodones. The irrigation supply canal ran from Algodones along the east side of the river; water was transferred to the west side Atrisco and Pajarito units via a siphon under the Rio Grande, just north of the Central Avenue bridge (Figure 9). The canal on the west side of the river, called the Arenal Main Canal, ran as far west as Coors Boulevard and supplied water to the Ranchos de Atrisco Acequia, Arenal Acequia, and Atrisco Acequia. The drains include the Atrisco Riverside Drain, Atrisco Drain and Isleta Drain—these drains ensured that water-logging did not occur and transferred excess water from the fields and areas of high water table back to the Rio Grande.

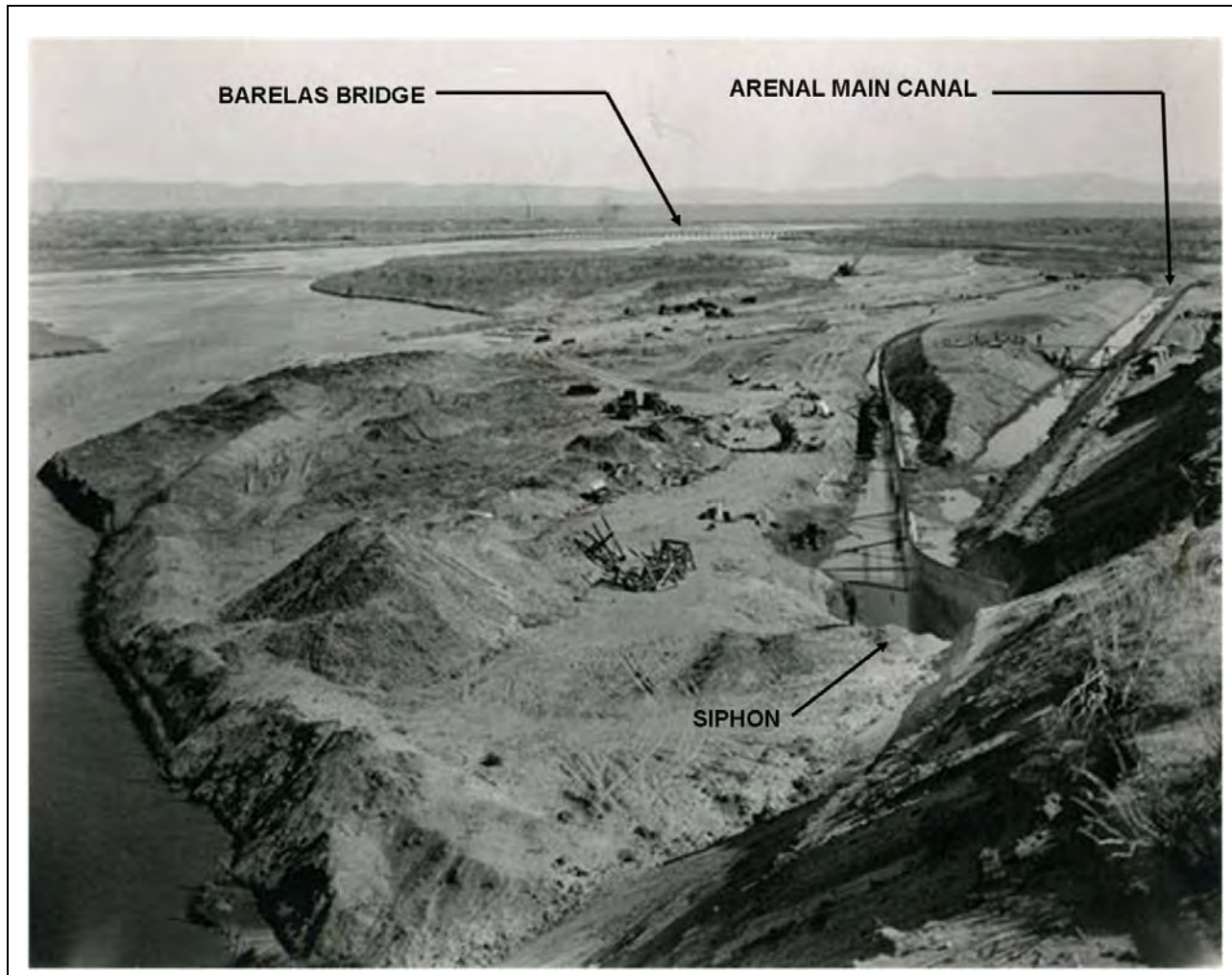
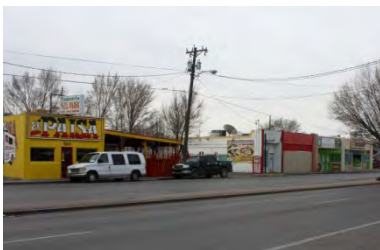


Figure 9: Construction of the Arenal Main Canal showing where the siphon opens after crossing the Rio Grande. Looking south towards the Barelas Bridge.

Auto-Oriented Commercial Development

US 85 ran from El Paso, Texas, to Fortuna, North Dakota, and Route 66 ran from Chicago to Los Angeles—both routes used the Barelvas Bridge and a short portion of Bridge Boulevard before the roadway turned to the south. If a westbound traveler on Route 66 did not make the south US 85 turn, he or she would continue on what eventually became known as Bridge Boulevard (it was originally an unpaved, unnamed road; then by 1939 it was named Arenal Road; by 1944 it was called Bridge Street and, as one moved further west, referred to as State Road 135; and finally by 1957 it was known as Bridge Boulevard). Because businesses were also trying to catch tourists who were coming from the south on US 85 before they crossed the river into Albuquerque, the densest development on the current Bridge Boulevard is between the US 85/Route 66 bend and the bridge. This is also the area that includes the most likely source for historic properties associated with Albuquerque’s auto-oriented commercial development. The property types relating to activity on US 85/Route 66 will include tourist camps, filling stations, mechanics’ shops, restaurants, and residential structures adapted to commercial use.

AUTO-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT on US 85



Streetscape

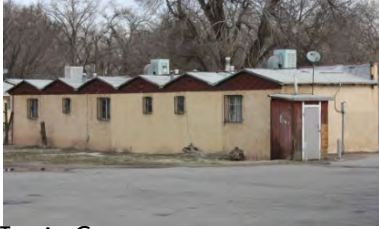


Storefronts

Brief Background of the US 85 Segment of Bridge Boulevard:

At the turn of the century, most travel into Albuquerque was carried out via railroad and tourists stayed overnight at the Harvey House or downtown hotels. But in the mid-1920s, as automobiles became more accessible to the American public and recreational travel grew, many small, private, locally owned “tourist camps” were being built on US 85 and 66 both on the outskirts of Albuquerque and along those corridors within town. Tourist camps typically a collection of stand-alone structures or rooms that would be rented for the night and often had communal bathrooms and kitchens (although the earliest tourist camps consisted of actual camp sites in public parks). Over time they became known as “tourist courts,” and after World War II they were typically under a single roof and began to look more like modern motels. In general, these camps operated well into the 1960s. They provided an increasing array of amenities, such as heat, electric fans, and private bathrooms and kitchens.

Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization



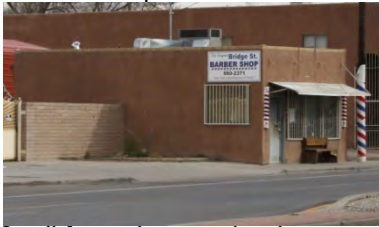
Tourist Camp



Historic Corridor Signs



Mechanic Shop



Small framed vernacular shop



Vibrant streetscape

While it is known that such tourist camps existed on the north side of Albuquerque, primarily on north 4th Street, it has not been documented that the same phenomenon occurred on the south side along US 85. The historic Sanborn maps show tourist camps on US 85 near the Rio Grande as early as 1931—three within our project area and more to the south, after the US 85 bend. Starting in 1931, the auto-oriented development along this part of the corridor grew and became denser with the addition of filling stations, mechanics' shops, restaurants, and eventually a nearby nightclub. But, by 1957, the tourist camp activity had dropped off significantly and only one camp remained on this segment of US 85.

Architectural Character:

The architecture on this portion of the Bridge Boulevard Corridor is primarily vernacular. There is only one tourist camp that retains the character of such a facility. It is a linear, many-gabled structure with multiple rooms (each under one of the gables). It appears that the front (parking lot side) of the building was retrofitted post-construction with a Territorial Style parapet to give the property more of a regional flair.

The commercial properties appear to have been simple rectangular, concrete masonry unit or hollow clay tile structures with glazed storefronts, or small adobe structures that were retrofitted for commercial purposes. Most of the storefronts have been altered and painted in vibrant colors to reflect the change from buildings that provided services for auto-tourism to those that support the newer immigrant population in the neighborhood.

There are a few smaller, one-story buildings that are frame or adobe in this section of the Bridge Boulevard Corridor. These most likely contributed to the Route 66 commercial services (they appear on the early Sanborn maps).



Commercial Signage



View of Rio Grande bridge (east)

Landscape Features

Five Points is the crossing of Bridge Boulevard, Sunset Road and Five Points Road. According to historic maps, Sunset Road was originally known as Pajarito-Atrisco Road, but by 1944 the name was changed to Sunset. In 1926 this road, which originally connected Pajarito to Atrisco, became part of US 85/Route 66 at Arenal. Five Points Road was a short segment that ran between the Five Points intersection and Gatewood Road, which connected the villages of Armijo and Atrisco, and as historic maps indicate, was called Gurule Road until 1947 (Figure 10). Both Five Points and Gatewood Road appear to be significant features (Gatewood Road has a sign that marks it as “historic”); however no information could be found with regard to the intersection or road.

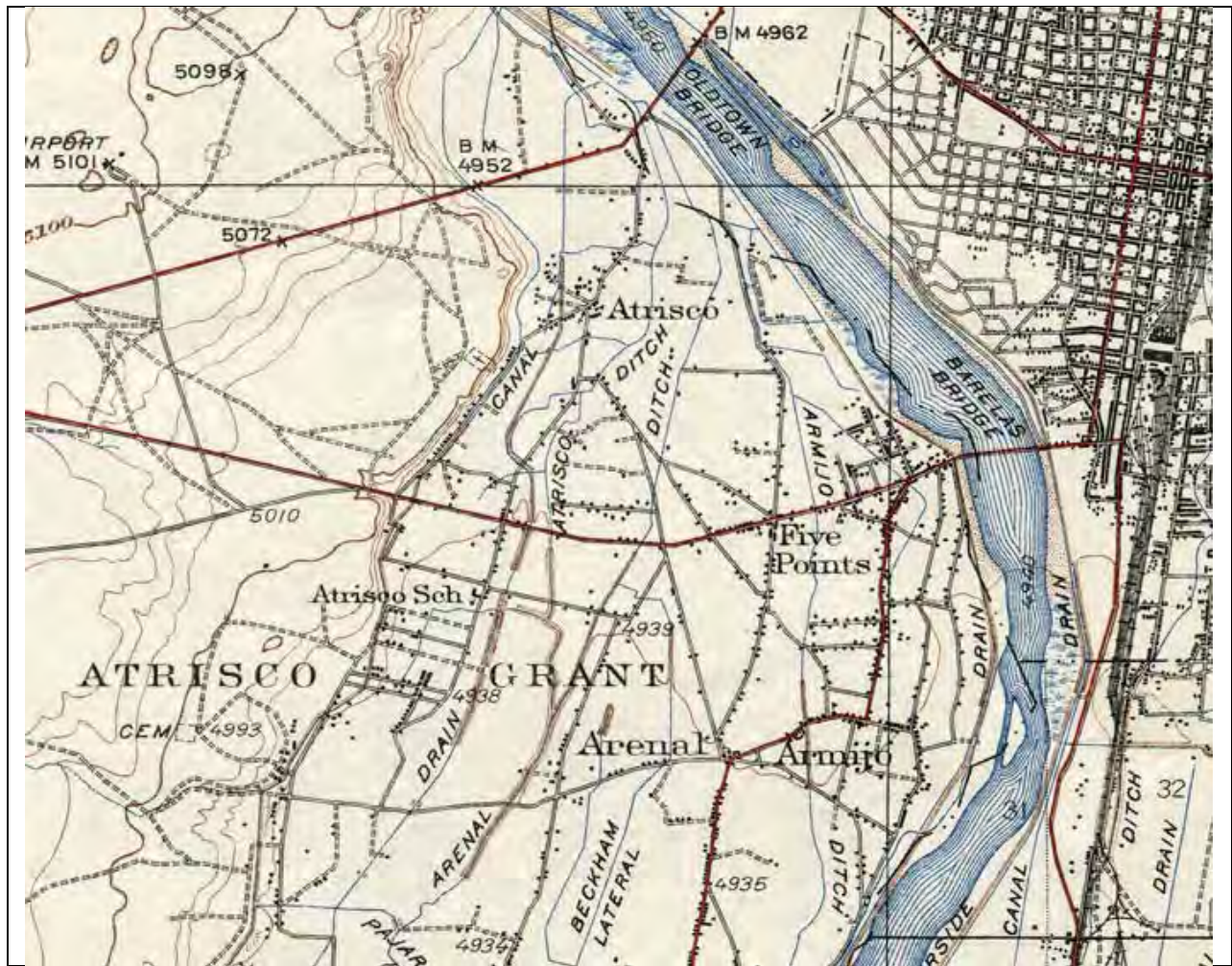


Figure 10: 1937 topographic map showing the project area roads, bridge development and MRGCD works.

The MRGCD features that cross the project area include the Arenal Main Canal, the Ranchos de Atrisco Acequia, Arenal Acequia, and Atrisco Acequia, the Atrisco Riverside Drain, and the two internal drains, the Atrisco Drain and Isleta Drain (Figure 11).

Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization

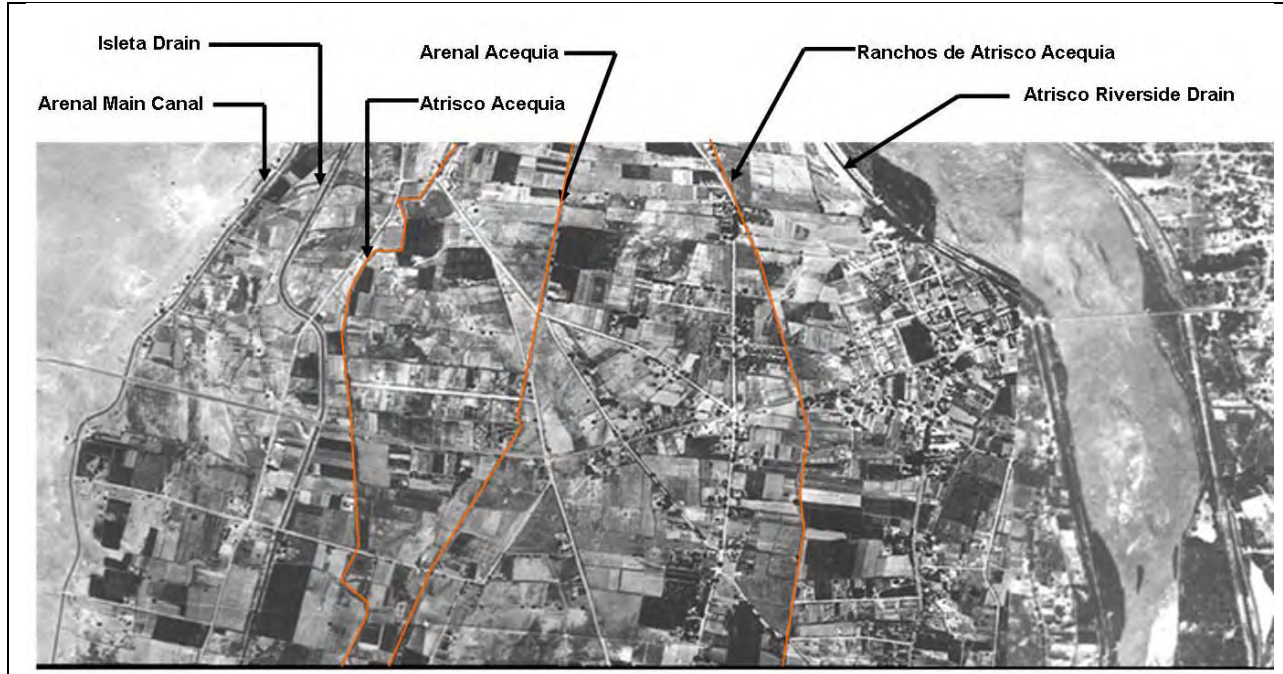


Figure 11: 1935 aerial photograph showing entire length of project area with canals, drains, *acequias* and fields.

Source: United States Bureau of Reclamation

LANDSCAPE FEATURES



Atrisco Riverside Drain



Ranchos de Atrisco Acequia

Brief Background & History at Bridge Street:

Until recently, the South Valley has been primarily characterized by vernacular architecture and agricultural fields. The area's rural agricultural heritage and its connection to the historic Camino Real provide it with the potential for noteworthy cultural landscapes. A cultural landscape is most often thought of as a natural terrain which has been modified by human use to reflect social, economic, or religious (that is cultural) values. At the same time, it can also include the built environment or natural terrain features (such as mountains) where no deliberate modification has taken place but nonetheless holds cultural (usually religious) value. The study area in the South Valley represents some of the last vestiges of the area's long-standing agricultural landscape. Having said that, the areas immediately adjacent to the road do not generally reflect the agricultural nature or heritage of the valley and Atrisco grant lands.

Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization



Arenal Acequia



Atrisco Acequia



Isleta Drain



Arenal Main Canal

Although for the most part the fields are not intact along the Bridge Boulevard Corridor, the MRGCD features that allowed for continued farming and flood control in the Rio Grande valley do cross the road alignment. These features have been formally determined eligible and are treated as historic properties.

The US 85 route basically followed the historic Camino Real corridor and includes the river crossing at (or near) the Barelas Bridge. Therefore the Bridge Boulevard roadway itself from the intersection with the current Isleta Boulevard is part of the National Historic Trail and is a National Historic Landmark. This section of road also holds the distinction of being part of the 1926-1937 Route 66 alignment and is part of the Route 66 National Scenic Byway.

Landscape Character:

The area immediately adjacent to the road corridor along the Camino Real/US 85/Route 66 section of Bridge Boulevard do not reflect the historic character of the early trail. They do, however—as noted in the auto-oriented commercial development section of this report—reflect the character of commercial properties that catered to auto-tourism.

The MRGCD features are linear ditches that are lined with paths or roadways (at least on one side). The drains and *acequias* are unlined earthen ditches with concrete culverts where they intersect with Bridge Boulevard. The *acequias* also include trees and other vegetation along their alignment. The Arenal Main Canal is lined with concrete and includes pedestrian bridges; it also has concrete culverts at the intersection with Bridge Boulevard. As one moves along the corridor the *acequias* are noticeable by the lack of development and the large trees that run adjacent to them.



Cottonwood trees lining acequia



Camino Real/Route 66 Section

Vernacular Architecture

There are scattered examples of New Mexico vernacular architecture all along Bridge Boulevard; however, many have additions and alterations since their original construction, which would affect their architectural integrity (in terms of eligibility for the National Register). If any of



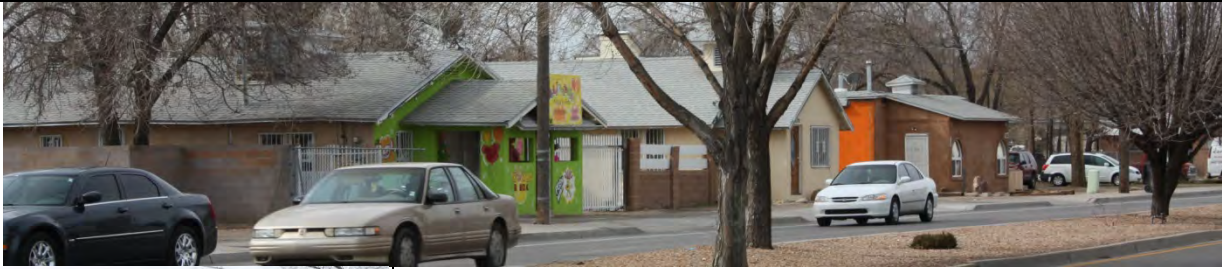
these vernacular buildings along the corridor are eligible, they would most likely be eligible at the local level of significance. One building of particular note is the Five Points Church which is now a boxing gym (**Figure 12**). It seems that until the 1950s, this area was primarily rural in character with scattered homes between fields and *acequias* (**Figure 13**).

Figure 12: Five Points Church c. 1930.
Source: The Albuquerque Museum, Alabama Milner collection.



Figure 13: General view of the South Valley, c. 1930
Source: The Museum of Albuquerque, Alabama Milner collection.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE



Five Points Church(Bad Boy Boxing)



New Mexico vernacular



Later vernacular house



Two story gable house



Small drive up restaurant

Brief Background & History at Bridge Street:

From the early aerials it appears that development on the west end of what is now Bridge Boulevard was sporadic, as the area was primarily agricultural fields. By the 1950s, when the area began to appear on road maps, it seems there was more development of housing, filling stations, restaurants, and grocery stores. The additional commercial development would have been needed to support an economy that was changing from rural subsistence to a more urban lifestyle—one that involved employment in Albuquerque or at one of the businesses providing services to tourists at the Route 66 end of the area.

Architectural Character:

The buildings along this corridor that might be of local historical significance play off of higher architectural styles, but they use a simpler architectural vocabulary. The Five Points Church is typical of the New Mexico Vernacular style—simple, gable roofed, and rectangular. A residential building on the west side of Old Coors Road is also a New Mexico Vernacular-style building, with a simple gable roof and wood, double hung 3/1 (vertical pane) windows—one of the few along this corridor that has not been significantly altered. A few residential buildings are two stories and may be of earlier construction; however, most seem to be of later construction and many have undergone alteration.

In addition to the church and residential vernacular buildings along the Bridge Boulevard Corridor, there are some auto-oriented structures, including a drive-up restaurant and several filling stations. These appear to be local adaptations of larger, corporate-planned facilities that would have been designed and constructed elsewhere.



Filling station



Mechanic and residential

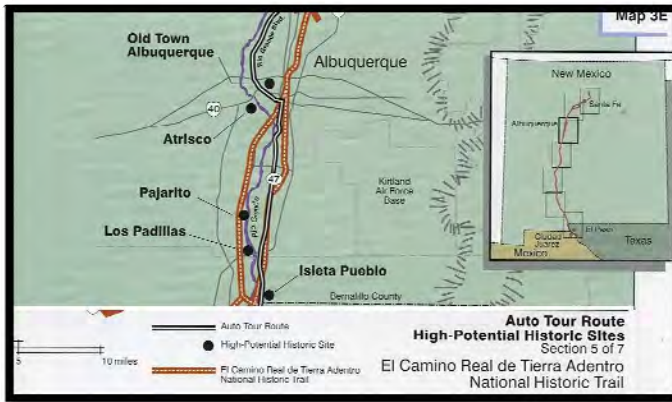
Historic Properties Along the Bridge Street Study Corridor

The important cultural resources within the study area include: 1) a short portion of Bridge Boulevard that has multiple layers of historic significance; 2) a landscape that includes features from the MRGCD Historic District; and 3) a number of vernacular resources that have yet to be evaluated. The corridor's diverse history is exemplified by its eclectic built environment and cultural landscapes. Although no specific historical information could be discerned, under the scope of this project, for Five Points or Gatewood Road, these may be considered important within the area community. More in-depth historical research may be necessary. In summary:

1) The portion of Bridge Boulevard that is in and of itself, a resource:

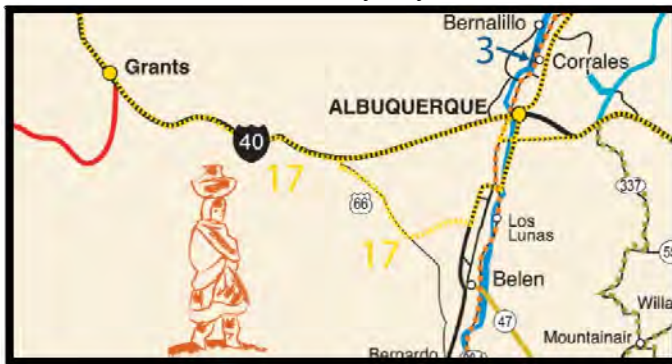
a) Camino Real de Tierra Adentro – 17th to 19th centuries

National Historic Trail Camino Real National Scenic Byway



b) Route 66 Corridor– 1926-1937

Route 66 National Scenic Byway



2) MRGCD Historic District contributing properties:

- a) Arenal Main Canal
- b) Ranchos de Atrisco Acequia
- c) Arenal Acequia
- d) Atrisco Acequia

- e) Atrisco Riverside Drain
- f) Isleta Drain

3) Resources that should be surveyed:

Although there have been numerous archaeological surveys along the Bridge Boulevard Corridor, none have found any resources. It does appear that there might be a few New Mexico Vernacular buildings and a number of resources that could be associated with 1996 Auto-Oriented Commercial Development historic context for Albuquerque. These buildings and the few remaining agricultural fields should be evaluated for National Register of Historic Places eligibility once proposed project alternatives are defined. Examples of actions that could result in impacts include changes to alignment and appurtenances, takings, and vibrations from construction.

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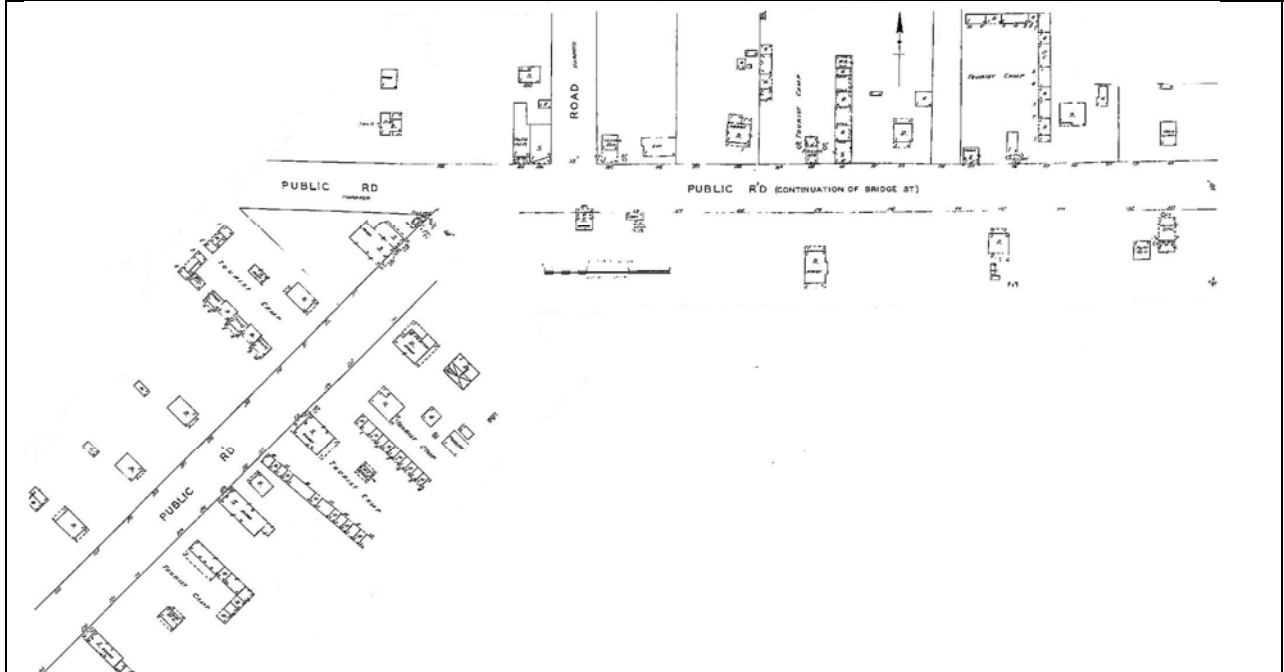
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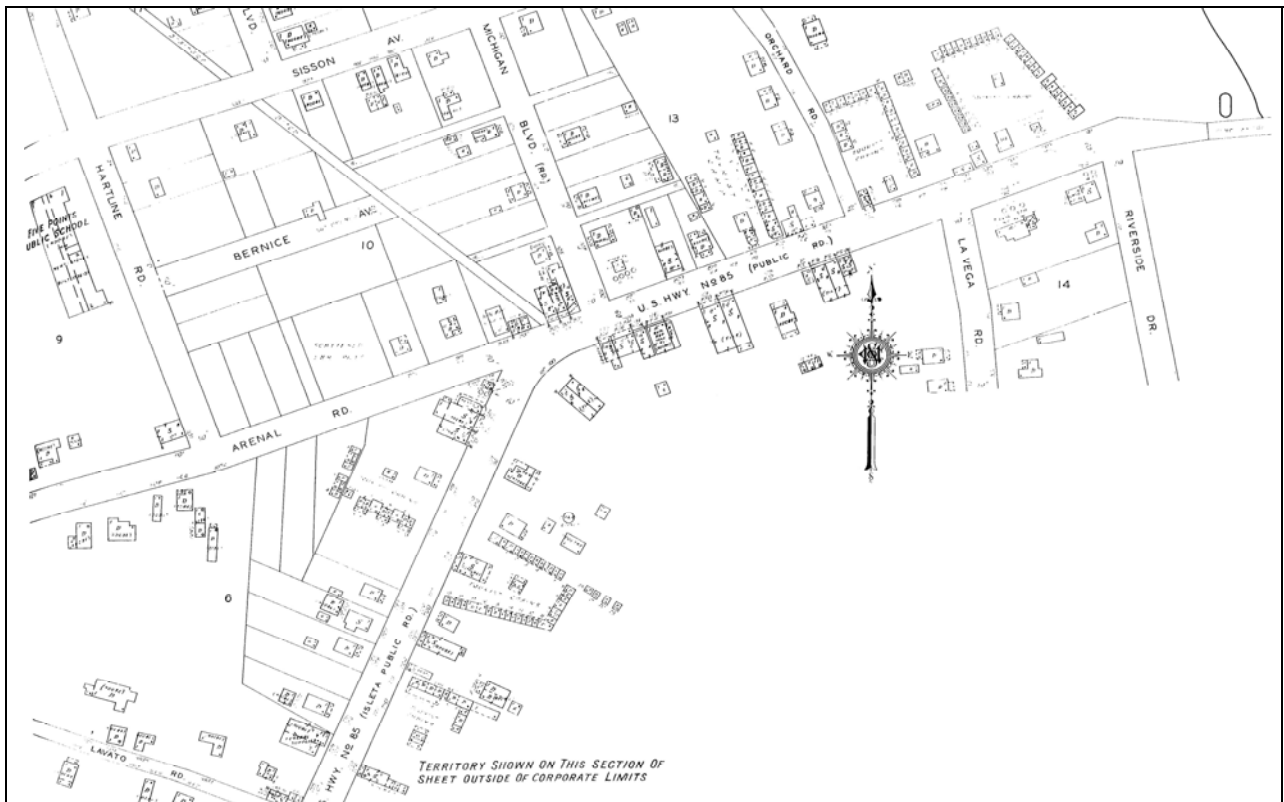
1996 "Auto-Oriented Commercial Development in Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1916 to 1956." National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, on file, New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, Santa Fe.

**APPENDIX A
HISTORIC MAPS OF THE STUDY AREA**

Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization

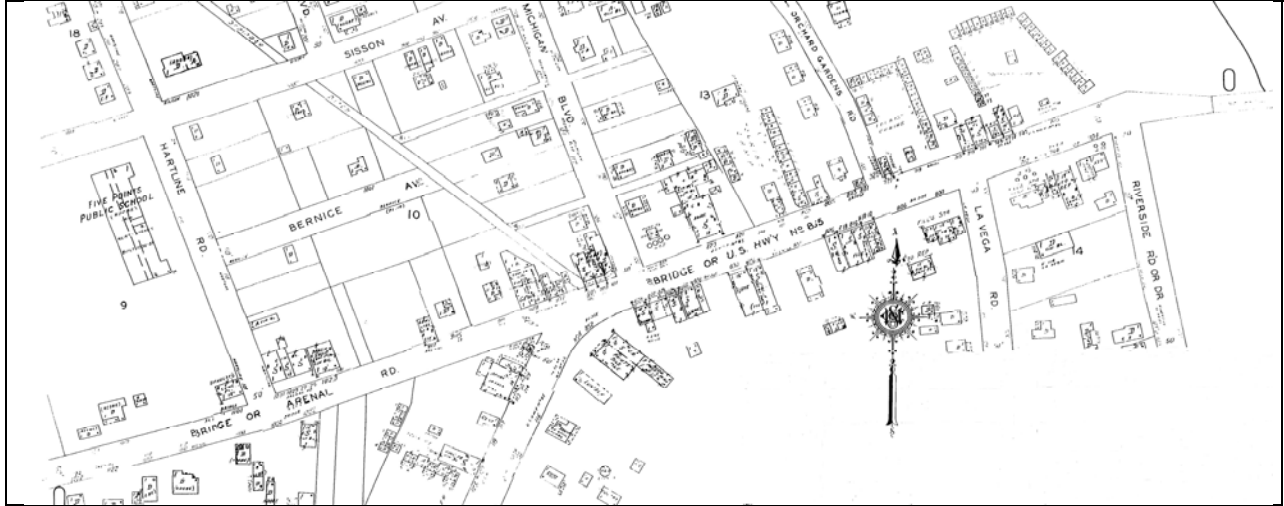


1931: Sanborn Map of the unpaved public road that would become Bridge Street. The river crossing is just to the right of this map.



1942: Sanborn Map of US Highway 85, a public road (also known as Arenal Road farther west) – this eventually became known as Bridge Street. The river crossing is just to the right of the map. Note the tourist courts and more dense commercial development along the US 85 portion of the road.

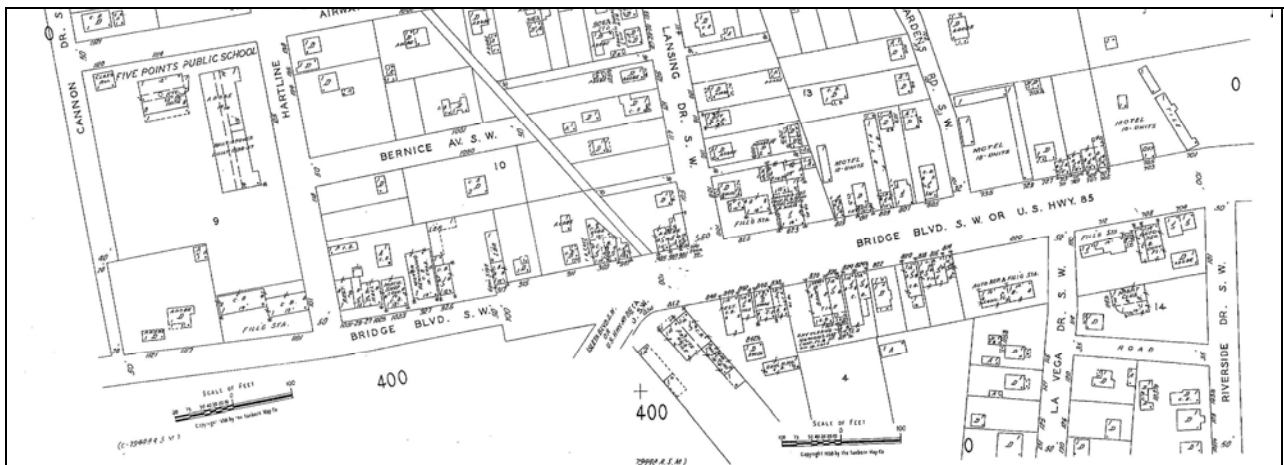
Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization



1951: Sanborn Map of US Highway 85, also known as Bridge by 1951 (farther west the road was also known as Bridge or Arenal Road). The river crossing is just to the right of the map. Note the tourist courts and more dense commercial development along the US 85 portion of the road.



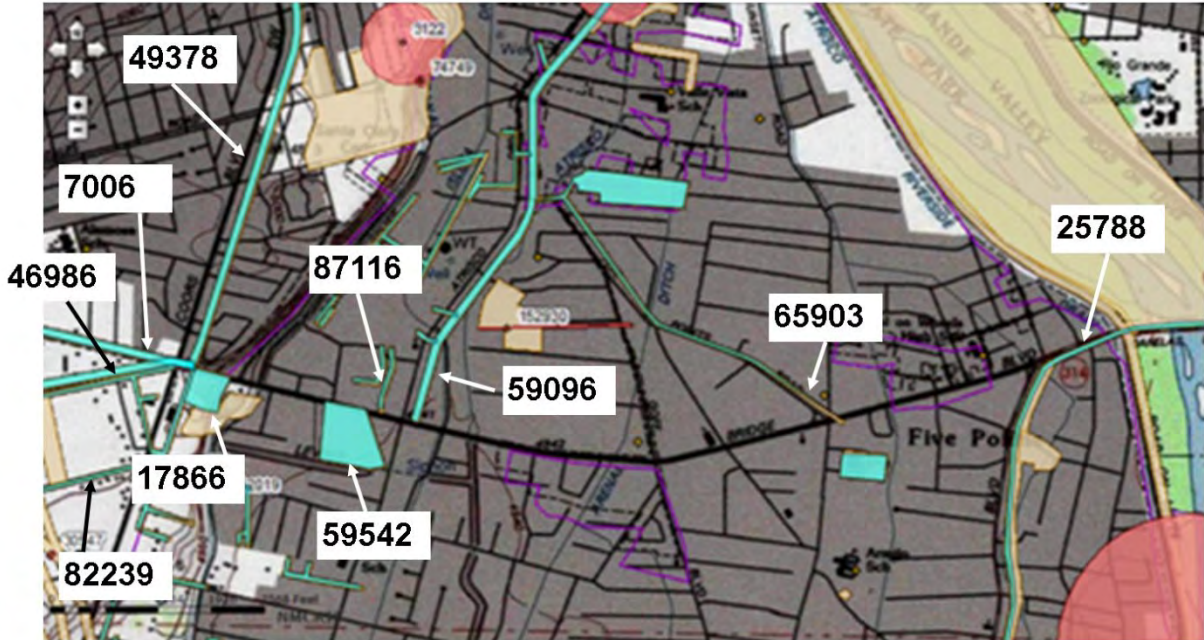
1957: The Sanborn Index Map for Bridge Street; the first map that shows extension of the road past Five Points.



1957: The Sanborn detail map still only shows the portion of Bridge closest to the river. Note that this is the first map to show an irrigation ditch.

**APPENDIX B
RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS SEARCH**

Bridge Boulevard Historic Resource Characterization



Below is a list of the mapped surveys. None revealed any archaeological resources in this corridor.

NMCRIS	GIS Acreage	Survey Type	Performing Organization	Lead Agency	Activity Start Date
46986	28.168803	Archaeological Survey	Quivira Research Center/Associates	NM State Highway & Transportation Dept	3/1/1994
82239	23.481014	Archaeological Survey	Parsons, Brinckerhoff	NM State Highway & Transportation Dept	2/4/2003
7006	79.674567	Archaeological Survey	University of New Mexico Office of Contract Archaeology	NM State Highway & Transportation Dept	6/2/1985
49378	12.819743	Archaeological Survey	Cibola Research Consultants	NM State Highway & Transportation Dept	11/17/1994
17866	8.551508	Archaeological Survey	Quivira Research Center/Associates	U.S. Postal Service	1/28/1987
59542	10.939403	Archaeological Survey	TRC, Inc.	County of Bernalillo	1/12/1998
87116	19.160545	Archaeological Survey	Parsons, Brinckerhoff	US Environmental Protection Agency Region VI	1/29/2004
59096	18.02494	Archaeological Survey	Lone Mountain Archaeological Services	County of Bernalillo	10/14/1996
65903	14.875297	Archaeological Survey	Taschek Environmental Consulting	County of Bernalillo	7/27/1999
25788	1209.370758	Archaeological Survey	Chambers Consultants and Planners	US Bureau of Land Management Las Cruces District	11/14/1988