

## **New Look For Pasadena Train Station**

**By FRANCISCO VARA-ORTA - 2/16/2009**  
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If you're looking for a history lesson in transportation reinventing itself, look no further than the train station at Del Mar Boulevard and Arroyo Parkway.

In 120 years, the Pasadena station has morphed several times: from the Victorian Pasadena Train Station, where trains stopped on their way between Chicago and Los Angeles in the late 1880s, to a Santa Fe railroad station in the 1930s, the site of several whistle stops made by presidential candidates Franklin D. Roosevelt, Herbert Hoover and Thomas Dewey.

Then, earlier this decade, it was reborn when local developer Urban Partners LLC restored the station and incorporated it into a mixed-used development with apartments and retail shops amid a Metro Gold Line metro railway stop. Once again, passengers load and unload onto the station's platforms.

Urban Partners was selected by the L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority in 2000 from among 11 bidders to develop the 3.8 acre site.

The \$150 million Del Mar Station development included rehabilitation of the historic Santa Fe Depot, which necessitated moving the old station across the street to Central Park on rubber tires while four buildings were constructed.

"The station was dilapidated and had been all boarded; it was very unattractive," recalled Paul Keller, a founding principal of Urban Partners. "We had to chop it up in big pieces and move it on huge rubber tires because it was a landmark and we had to be so careful about it."

Working with Pasadena architectural firm Moule & Polyzoides, the city of Pasadena, the Gold Line Construction Authority and the MTA, Urban Partners created a "courtyard housing" concept for the site. There are 347 apartment units, some sitting over the rail line, or "embracing it" as Keller puts it. Rent ranges from \$1,900 for a studio to as much as \$3,000 for a two-bedroom unit. The city shares a 1,190-space parking garage with the apartment complex, offering a park-and-ride option for rail commuters.

As for entertainment, the station has retail shops and eateries such as Philly's Best, a cheese steak and hoagie restaurant, and La Grande Orange, an upscale café offering gourmet food. Only a few blocks away is the Old Town Pasadena retail strip on Colorado Boulevard.

Finally, a public art installation was created by Ries Niemi, an Edison, Wash., artist best known for his public art that involves manipulating industrial metal. The project was finished in 2007.

Pasadena City Councilman Steven Madison represents the area where the station is located, and has watched the development rise during his 10 years on the City Council.

"I'm so proud of the project," he said. "It kind of embodies the urban village. Old Town is just blocks away, and it gives people places to live, walk, play and work. Now we have other projects, this was really the first big one."

Urban Partners sold the development in December 2004 to Archstone, a Denver-based real estate investment trust, in midconstruction.

### **OUTSTANDING PROJECT**

### **Del Mar Station**

Del Mar Boulevard and Arroyo Parkway, Pasadena

Developer: Urban Partners, downtown Los Angeles

Description: 347 apartment homes, 11,000 square feet of retail and 1,190 parking spaces on 3.8 acres

Key Fact: The location has been used for rail transit for more than a century.

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