

The Boise Depot

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Then & Now



Parks &
Recreation

The Boise Depot

History of the Boise Depot

1887

Boise City's first depot was built on the Bench a short distance from the present building.

1893

Oregon Short Line built stone depot at 10th and Front Streets.



No. 137 Arrival of the first main line train, Boise, Idaho. April 16, 1925.

1922

Contract between Oregon Short Line and Boise Chamber of Commerce was signed to provide "through train" service by way of the City of Boise.

1924

New York architects Carrere, Hastings, Shreve and Lando prepared plans for station on the present site.

1925

Thousands turned out to see the first transcontinental engine steam into the new station.

1927

Howard Platt Gardens dedicated.

1931

Capitol Boulevard Memorial Bridge opened.

1948

Six passenger trains rolled into the Boise station each day, three from each direction: The City of Portland, the Portland Rose and the Idahoan.

1959

Union Pacific donated #2295 ("Big Mike") to the City of Boise and it was placed in Julia Davis Park.

One of Boise's most prominent landmarks, the red-tiled Boise Depot is a beautiful mission-style structure that provides a unique historic setting for weddings, corporate parties, business receptions, luncheons, meetings and community events.

Situated on the rim at the south end of Capitol Boulevard, the panoramic view from the Depot patio is a stunning glimpse of the city skyline and ridgeline of the Boise Foothills. In the evening, the 96-foot bell tower is bathed in floodlights and is seen throughout the city.

"Built in 1925... heralded as "the most beautiful structure of its kind in the west."

Built in 1925 for use as a Union Pacific railroad depot, the building was designed by New York architects and was heralded as "the most beautiful structure of its kind in the west."

A \$3.4 million renovation completed in 1993 returned the building to its original state with beige interior walls and trim painted in red, blue and yellow. The lobby's Spanish trusses feature decorative rail cars. Two sets of glass-paned wooden doors

lead visitors from a large brick plaza on the north side of the building and also from the train tracks on the south side of the building.



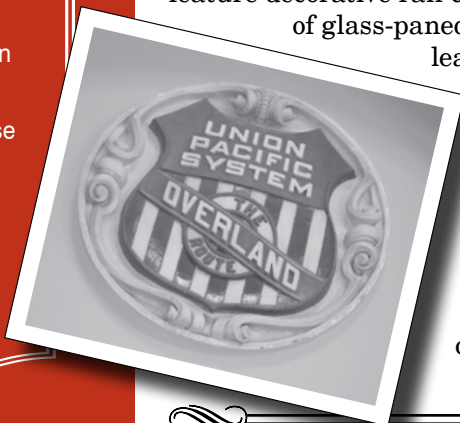
The 3,542-square foot Great Hall inside the Depot is a popular site for events of all types.

Amenities

The Great Hall, a soaring 3,542-square foot multi-story atrium, once served as the building's waiting room. The area can accommodate 300 people with 165 for sit-down events. Six arched entrances and upper story windows allow a flood of natural light to enter the great hall with its airy 44-foot ceiling.

Overlooking the Main Hall is the bride's room. Accessed by matching stair cases, the bride's room provides a dramatic entrance into the main area. Couches and chairs provide comfortable seating and a relaxing dressing area for formal events.

"...I have vivid memories about the depot -- the train, the berths, the dining car --
- Charlotte

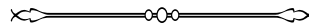




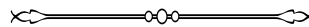
A favorite feature of the Platt Gardens are ponds with koi, ducks and geese. These and other features are enjoyed by local citizens and visitors year round.

Platt Gardens

Built by Union Pacific in 1927, the Depot gardens feature a winding walkway, benches, a koi pond, a monument of volcanic rock and planter beds with seasonal flowers. A favorite site for wedding photos and class pictures, the park provides a splendid view of the city and quiet areas for reflection. The Platt gardens were designed by Spanish landscape architect Ricardo Espino.



**“In 1938,
Franklin 8th grade
had our graduation
pictures taken
by the fountain...
The grounds
are – and were –
beautiful ... ”
– Virginia Smith**



The Barkalow Brothers Newsstand.

At the west end of the building, the original Barkalow Brothers wood and glass newsstand once provided train passengers with reading materials, snacks and other items.

A catering kitchen provides serving space and a double-sized industrial refrigerator.

Free Public Hours

The Great Hall and Bell Tower are open to the public, except on legal holidays, as follows:

May - September
Sundays, Noon-6 p.m.
Mondays, 1-8 p.m.

October - April
Sundays, Noon-4 p.m.
Mondays, 2-6 p.m.

Reservations

The Great Hall is reservable 11 months in advance for year round use from 10 a.m. to midnight. To make a reservation, call (208) 608-7644 or send an email to reserve@cityofboise.org. See additional photos and information online www.cityofboise.org/parks/reservations.

**... I loved everything
and the trips, the porters,
my car all of it.”
The Silver**

History of the Boise Depot

1962

The Barkalow Brothers newsstand closed because of the decline in the number of rail passengers.

1968

The U.S. Post Office discontinued mail freight on the Portland Rose. Full airmail service began in 1969.

1971

The last Portland Rose passenger train pulled out of the Depot.

1974

The Union Pacific Mainline Depot was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1977

Amtrak's Pioneer passenger train began service between Seattle and Salt Lake City.

1990

Morrison Knudsen Corporation purchased the depot from Union Pacific Railroad.



The Depot is a Boise landmark.

1993

The refurbished Depot opened with a public ceremony.

1996

The City of Boise took possession of the Depot.

1997

Amtrak's last passenger train rolled out of Boise.

Story of the Restoration...

Interior

The Spanish trusses and rafters in the Great Hall have been carefully restored. On each truss is a design with special meaning; at each end is a primitive locomotive, in the center, a double-end car, and between the two ends are two old-time coaches.

The original trim was replicated in the original shades of blue, vermilion and yellow.

Tower

Prior to the restoration, the tower had never been accessible to visitors. A nine-person elevator and supplementary stairway were installed. The original clock was rebuilt and the chime restored.

Air Conditioning

The former waiting room – now called the “Great Hall” – had never before been air conditioned, but a new system was installed.

Tiles

All of the building’s 16,000 exterior roofing tiles were removed so they could be stripped, cleaned and reinstalled or replaced. The former baggage and traffic offices was last roofed in 1950 with an inferior tile that had to be replaced with a reproduction of the original.

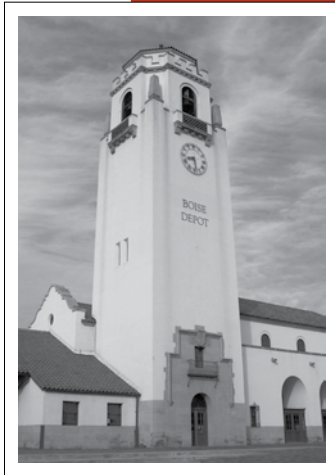
Paving Bricks

The original paving bricks were 4” x 8.” All 45,000 of the original bricks were pulled up, cleaned and, if not broken, reinstalled. Engraved bricks were purchased in the 1990s to raise funds for acquisition of the Depot. The engraved bricks are located on the north and south side of the Great Hall.

After purchasing the building in 1990, Morrison Knudsen Co., set about restoring the structure to its original glory. The completed restoration was unveiled in 1993.

Today visitors can view the valley from the bell tower or wander through the manicured Platt gardens that surround the building.

The Depot is also available for special events, such as weddings, business meetings and family gatherings.



Windows

All of the building’s exterior wood windows were removed and restored. Some old and worn but serviceable wood was left in place, to minimize the removal of historic fabric.

Gutters

The original copper gutters, down spouts and roofing had been damaged, destroyed or removed. The copper work was replicated in its entirety.

New Entrance

The restoration required 140,000 pounds of sandstone -- mostly for a new entrance on the east end of the building. The sandstone comes from the area of the original quarry near the Old Penitentiary -- the same as that originally used in the building.

Baggage Room Doors

Old photos showed that the doors on the baggage room had corner guards made of cast iron. For the new baggage doors 40,000 pounds of cast iron replicas were forged to match the originals.

Lighting

Sometime in the 1940s, exterior lights were removed from the alcoves near the former waiting room. Replacements were manufactured based on old photos.

The original lights in the former waiting room could not be dimmed to save energy so 250 Beacon Light “Bulb Boss” dimmers were installed.

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“The Depot has always stood out... as a Boise landmark, which has gallantly survived the winds of change to coming out looking ever more special to future generations.”

– Travis Kidd

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Exterior Doors

The exterior doors of the building had to be replaced. Because today’s doors are much thinner than the 3-inch originals, custom-built doors were made. Hardware for the doors also had to be custom made.

Water

The water supply for the property did not meet today’s requirements for fire protection and for the adjacent city-owned park. A 150-foot well was installed to serve both purposes.



Parks & Recreation

Boise Depot, 2603 W. Eastover Terrace, Boise, ID 83706
208-608-7644 or TDD/TTY 800-377-3529 or www.cityofboise.org/parks/reservations