

DUS News Digest

December 7, 2012 to December 13, 2012

Denver Union Station: A Final Look Inside Before The Restoration Page 2
December 7, 2012 *Denver Infill Blog*

Denver Union Station: A Final Look Inside Before The Restoration

December 7, 2012

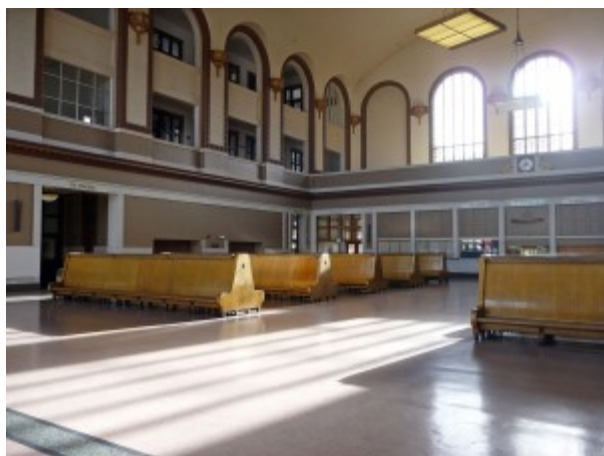
By Ken Schroepel, DenverInfill Blog

Last Saturday, DenverInfill and Union Station Advocates co-hosted an informal public open house at Denver Union Station for anyone who wanted to stop by for one last look inside the historic station before it is closed for the next year and a half for its long-awaited restoration and conversion into a mixed-use transit center with shops, restaurants, and a boutique hotel.

Despite the number of times I've been inside the station—I've given about 50 Union Station tours since October 2010—I realized I didn't really have many decent photos of the inside of Union Station's great hall. So, I arrived at the station about an hour early on Saturday to take some photos before the crowds arrived. It was a beautiful summer-like December 1st, already pushing 60 degrees by 9:00 AM. As I expected, the station was deserted. Since 2011 when the light rail station moved to its new location at the other end of the Union Station transit district and Amtrak moved to its temporary location at 21st and Wewatta, Union Station has been even quieter than normal, and "normal" for the past few decades has been pretty darn quiet already.

I had the great hall to myself for nearly half an hour. The intense Denver morning sun was streaming through the big east windows, as it has for the past 35,000 mornings. I was alone, yet I could sense the enduring presence of the millions of people who have passed through that voluminous space over the past century: people eagerly awaiting visitors from far away, people saying goodbye to friends and loved ones for perhaps the last time. The complete absence of people in such a historic public place left me feeling pensive—not in a sad way, as if the building was about to be torn down—but in a serene way, knowing that a momentous and welcome transformation was about to begin.

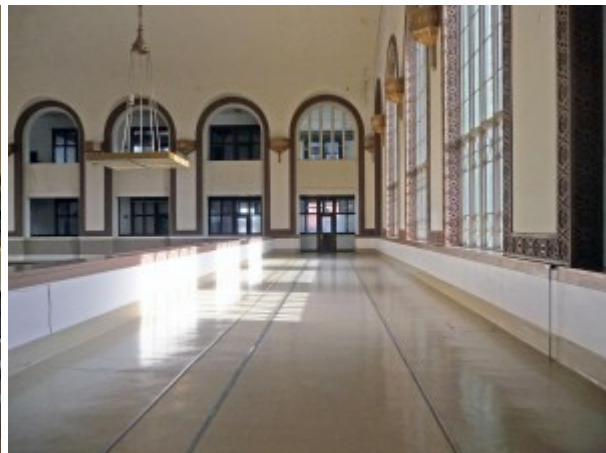
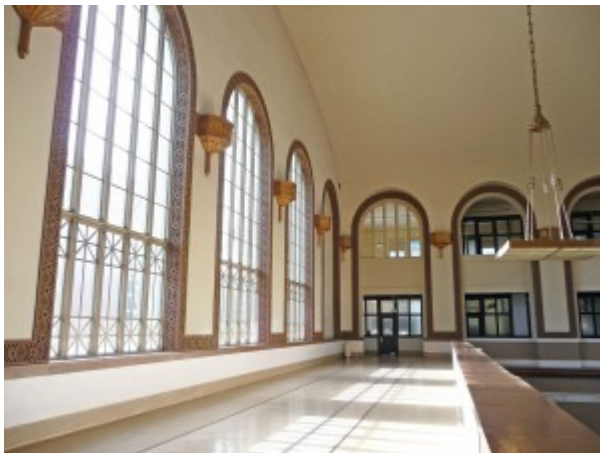
Here are a few photos of Denver Union Station's last sunny Saturday morning before the renovation begins:



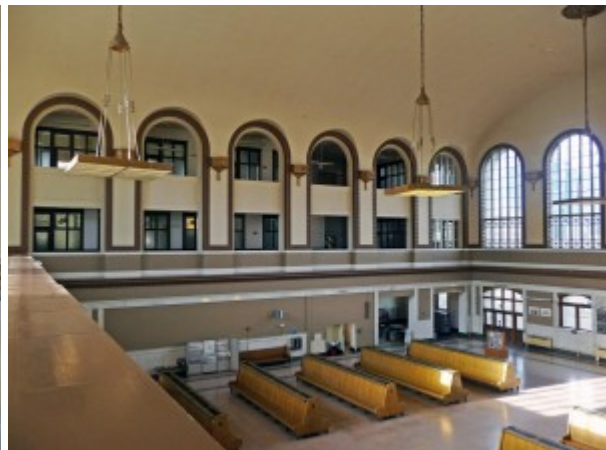
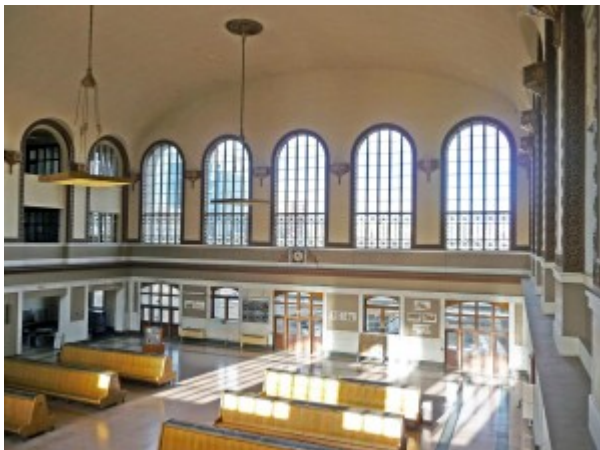
In 2016, pass through these doors and step onto a train that will transport you directly into the terminal at Denver International Airport:



Let's head up to the great hall's mezzanine. There's something special about this space. I always feel content there. Maybe it's the awesome view down 17th Street or just all the natural daylight. Regardless, this is going to make a great hotel lounge:

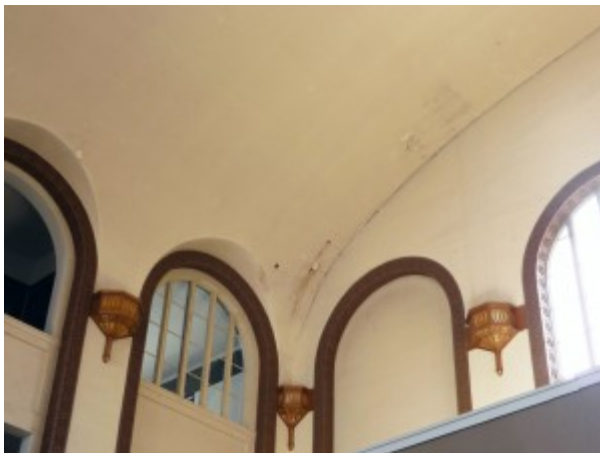


The view overlooking the great hall is special too:

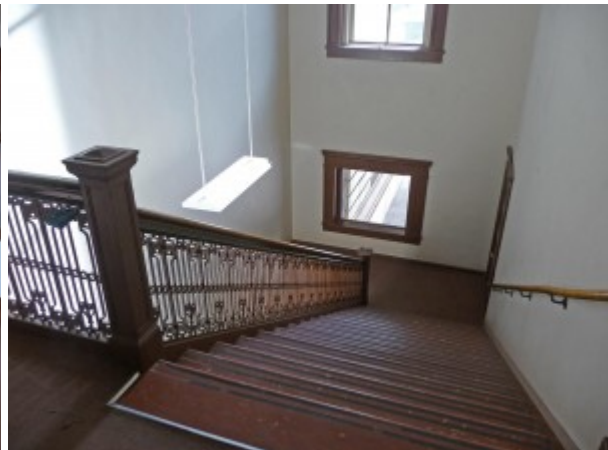




The old station will be getting some well-deserved TLC and, yes, those hideous florescent chandeliers will be replaced with replicas of the original light fixtures:



The stairways and hallways leading to the mezzanine:





Finally, the world's most uncomfortable benches (maybe some cushions are in their future?):



Take care, Union Station. See you in 2014!