

Santa Fe Depot

120 E. Santa Fe Avenue

1930

Spanish Colonial Revival

**Status: Local Landmark;
Listed on the National Register**



The present Santa Fe Depot replaced the original Victorian depot that was constructed in 1888, a year after the arrival of the railroad in Fullerton. Built slightly east of the old depot, this poured-in-place concrete structure is about 256 feet long (plus a 150-foot-long covered platform), designed in a Spanish Colonial style. The building's long, low-profile shape appears as a composite of forms, each with distinct features, which are assembled in a linear fashion. Arches of varying profiles appear throughout the building, while the use of a staggered gable and shed roofs with Mission tile adds to the visual complexity of the whole. This style of architecture is fully developed, with a fanciful use of detailing, such as quatrefoil windows, wooden shutters, concrete grillwork and a Monterey style balcony.

By 1990, many minor alterations to the Depot had taken place. After the Fullerton Redevelopment Agency gained ownership of the property in 1991, the Depot was fully rehabilitated and major improvements to the station were undertaken. The restoration of the Depot included the removal of the exterior paint to reveal the original varicolored stucco finish for the walls, which have been repaired and preserved. Also, many of the original interior features of the main lobby, including the ticket counter, have been replicated or restored. In 2015-16, the loading dock structure at the east end of the depot was completely restored including an extensive repair of the roof and the wooden posts; the platform structure may now be used for some future endeavor.

The Santa Fe Depot, along with the railroad, is directly linked to the city's historical development. The Amerige Brothers founded the city only after they were assured that the Santa Fe Railroad Company would build its new line through the land they wanted to buy. The first depot was constructed in 1888, as the town was being laid out, and the railroad tracts reached Fullerton the following year. The Amerige Brothers named their 490-acre platted townsite after George Fullerton, the manager of the real estate subsidiary of the railroad, the Santa Fe Land Company.

Much larger than the original Victorian station, the 1930-vintage depot was symbolic of the growth of Fullerton during the first 30 years of the 20th century. Upon its completion in July 1930, the Fullerton Daily News Tribune wrote, “Modern in keeping with the aspect of the city which it serves, the new depot marks another milestone in the progress of the fastest growing city in Orange County. Its construction marks the recognition of Santa Fe officials of the size to which Fullerton has attained....”

Since 1930, and particularly during the 1940s, the depot has been the first building people see when they arrive in Fullerton by train. The unique character of the building carries a lasting impression – now a very favorable one for the city – given its recent rehabilitation.

The Fullerton Station continues to function both as a freight and passenger depot, retaining a legacy of the city’s historic beginnings as well as serving as a reminder that it was the basis for the city’s growth in the early part of the twentieth century.



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