

# THE DENVER POST

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## Historic downtown Denver fire station to become part of new 12-story hotel

233-room Hilton Garden Inn is expected to open in early 2019 near Coors Field, Union Station



Rendering courtesy of Johnson Nathan Strohe

The historic Denver Hose Company No. 1 building will be incorporated into the development of a new 12-story Hilton Garden Inn near Union Station.

A historic Denver fire station will be incorporated into a new 12-story hotel breaking ground this week near Coors Field and Union Station.

The [Denver Hose Company No. 1 building](#), erected in 1883 for Denver's then-volunteer fire department and listed as a city historic landmark in 1986, will be fully restored as part of the \$80 million development at the corner of 20th Street and Chestnut Place.

The long-deteriorating building, one of the only remaining structures from an early Denver neighborhood known as the "Bottoms," will house a restaurant with outdoor patios facing Chestnut and 20th.

"This is going to be the crown jewel that makes this hotel a really unique and special hotel in Denver," said Josh Fine, executive vice president of Focus Property Group, the project's developer. "The building is the oldest fire house that's standing in the city. It's around 130 years old — beautiful brickwork on the front, two arches. We're going to be restoring the building to its original grandeur."

Additional amenities at the upscale, select-service hotel — a 233-room Hilton Garden Inn to be operated by Georgia-based Davidson Hotels — include ballroom and meeting space, underground parking and a fitness center.

Construction is set to begin this week, Fine said. The hotel is expected to open in early 2019. CBRE Hotels arranged the construction loan for the project, which was designed by Denver-based Johnson Nathan Strohe and Boss Architecture.

“This project was designed to capture the essence of Denver’s rich history while celebrating a new era of economic development,” said Tobias Strohe, partner at Johnson Nathan Strohe. “Centrally located between Union Station and Coors Field, this hotel embodies the depth of movement from what was [once an industrial railyard into a now thriving hub.](#)”

The development could have taken a different turn. About six years ago, Focus asked the city’s permission to demolish the historic fire station.

The Denver Landmark Preservation Commission rejected the request in early 2011, and Fine said in retrospect, he’s glad it worked out that way.

Focus has owned the property for more than a decade. It bought the historic building and adjacent self-storage facility following [voters’ approval of FasTracks in 2004.](#)

The firm continued to operate the self-storage business as it waited for the right time to redevelop the property. The fire station already was in rough shape following years of neglect and damage, Fine said.

“We were worried, frankly, about public safety, that it was a liability, that it was going to fall down if we didn’t take it down safely,” he said.

With help from the city and Historic Denver, Focus was able to find a way to stabilize the building until it was ready to do a full-scale restoration as part of a larger development.

“We always thought it was an asset and we always thought when we ultimately developed the property that we would incorporate it into the development in a unique and special way,” Fine said. “Once we figured out a way to eliminate the public safety concern, we no longer wanted to tear it down.”

Annie Levinsky, executive director of Historic Denver, said the group is glad to see the brick building finally being put back into active use. Over the years the building housed a print shop and a welding shop.

“The point of preservation is not to just let things sit there. It’s to find new uses for them so they’re still viable and important parts of our community,” Levinsky said.

“We make this argument in lots of situations, that you can’t re-create the authenticity of a historic building. Retaining it and incorporating it into your project will give you cache that others can’t replicate,” she said. “The Hose Company building is going to make this project stand out.”