

Sam Centre

632 13 Ave SE, Calgary, Alberta

Project Description: **Confluence Award**

The development of the Sam Centre aligns with the Culture and Entertainment vision for the Rivers District Master Plan and Stampede Park Concept Plan. Located within the Calgary Stampede Foundation's Youth Campus and adjacent to the banks of the Elbow River, Sam Centre is designed to be a northern gateway to Stampede Park.

The project site's four edges are designed to integrate with adjacent use types and building scales, through landscape transitions, activation of the building façade, and placement of program types. Along the south and east, Sam Centre connects to Enbridge Plaza and existing Youth Campus buildings. The edges are activated by the café at the southeast corner, integrated benches at the exterior walls, generous overhangs that extend toward the plaza, and landscape beds that frame 13th Avenue and 6th Street SE.

Along the north and west, Sam Centre stitches into its context through program, pathway connections, and scale. The historical program component of the building overlooks Rundle Ruins, allowing for visual connections and interpretation opportunities between the workroom and park space. Pathway connections link the existing Rundle Ruins to Sam Centre and the rest of Youth Campus. The building's 14-meter height complements surrounding Youth Campus buildings and limits shadowing onto the Rundle Ruins. Future 12th Avenue Promenade pedestrian enhancements will connect with SAM via Rundle Ruins pathways, and sidewalks along 6th Street SE. A north-south visual connection is established between the Rundle Ruins and Enbridge Plaza by the glazed north entrance of Sam Centre and the transparent south edge facing the plaza.

Sam Centre was designed to be accessed from all directions. The main entrance is located at the southeast corner facing Enbridge Plaza. A second entrance through the Rundle Ruins provides access to visitors arriving via public transit on 12th Avenue SE. With 13th Avenue SE anticipated to be closed to traffic, a drop off area for accessibility, individual and group visitors as well as service access to SAM is located off 6th Street SE.

Drawing from historical Stampede structures and vernacular agricultural buildings and barns, Sam Centre is a linear volume characterized by a large horizontal pitched roof. Creating deep overhanging soffits which mitigate heating and cooling loads, the roof evokes the welcoming verandahs of traditional Alberta architecture. A raised clerestory creates a beacon for visitors and passersby, bringing in natural light by day and creating a glowing lantern at night.

The structure uses a repetitive hybrid steel frame with mass timber beams. Exposed mass timber adds warmth to the interior, while horizontal terracotta cladding panels in Stampede red offer a modern yet durable nod to traditional barn boards.

Sam Centre's design and programming seamlessly blend to create an engaging, multifaceted visitor experience. Public gathering and exhibition spaces, interior and exterior, are designed to integrate into a single, flowing experience conceptually and spatially. Interior spaces are adaptable, accommodating multiple identities, forms of gathering, and functional uses—from typical exhibitions to interactive and immersive multimedia experiences, including facilities, and spaces for hands-on making and storytelling.