

2023



housing innovation



urban
design
awards



THE MERCURY BLOCK

The Mercury Block is an example of housing innovation going beyond the physical, fostering community health and well-being. Nestled just off 124th Street, in one of Edmonton's most desirable neighborhoods west of downtown, The Mercury Block is a 7-storey mid-rise, mixed-use development currently under construction with completion in December 2023.

Comprising 163 residential units of various sizes, including junior 1, 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units, The Mercury Block ensures inclusivity by providing a variety of housing options for individuals and families. This mix encourages a healthy and socially cohesive community.

At the heart of The Mercury Block's design philosophy is the concept of dynamic public space that defies traditional apartment living. The ground level exterior courtyard, surrounded by small tenant bays, creates a unique and inviting atmosphere that encourages social interaction and fosters a sense of belonging among residents and visitors alike. Moreover, the colorful and vibrant aesthetic, highlighted by a red exterior staircase, promotes healthy lifestyles and enhances pedestrian safety by keeping "eyes on the street."

The building's thoughtful approach to incorporating outdoor spaces also extends to the residential levels. 2-meter deep balconies provide occupants ample space to engage with the pedestrian realm and connect with nature. In addition to private amenity space, The Mercury Block also features a large, communal rooftop patio and fitness centre. These areas serve as extensions of the living spaces, encouraging outdoor activities, social gatherings, and healthy lifestyles.

Through curated retail experiences and incorporating universal design principles into the public realm, The Mercury Block becomes more than just housing—it becomes a magnetic community hub that is accessible and inclusive. Retail tenants on the ground floor not only add convenience to the lives of the those in the community, but also create opportunities for interaction and shared experiences.

Through its location, versatile residential units, dynamic public spaces, and emphasis on outdoor interactions, The Mercury Block nurtures a thriving community. By transforming a previously underutilized plot of land into a vibrant and playful urban realm, The Mercury Block sets the standard for neighborhood intensification and showcases the immense potential of thoughtful, community-oriented housing design.



view from 102 Ave of the southwest entrance to the interior courtyard



view from 123 St. of the east entrance to the interior courtyard



view of the interior courtyard from the southwest passageway

The Mercury Block aligns with The City Plan and its Big City Moves by showcasing exceptional place-making abilities that foster a sense of personal connection in big city living. Redeveloping a parking lot into a mixed-use building in an accessible district with excellent public transit and bicycle infrastructure, it embraces sustainable urban development. Acting as a community within a community, it demonstrates how innovative housing can promote a more connected and vibrant city life.



view of the public interior courtyard and the red exterior residential staircase



view of the 102 Ave commercial pedestrian interface



view from 102 Ave of the southeast perspective of the building

CX TOWER

DESIGN NARRATIVE

Located in Oliver, one of Edmonton's mature neighbourhoods, CX has breathed new life into an existing low-density housing site, transforming it into a vibrant urban residential project that seamlessly blends with the street and skyline. Setting new benchmarks for market rental opportunities, CX offers a diverse range of living spaces, from three-bedroom townhomes to innovative four-bedroom furnished student housing. Anchored in the vision of Edmonton's City Plan, CX provides cost-effective housing solutions with a minimalist, monochromatic design, exuding timeless elegance and durability.

CX has thoughtfully integrated several common amenity spaces, providing a vision of community within a rental development. Designed as extensions of individual apartments, these amenities serve as interactive hubs, fostering connections among residents. Recognizing the importance of social interaction, CX has prioritized creating spaces that enrich the lives of its occupants.

The townhouse podium provides an active and inviting streetscape characterized by sloped retaining walls that define defensible spaces for residents. The retaining walls also form garden planters for the units' front porch, with wood accents providing additional warmth to the pedestrian realm. An angular canopy defines the front entry to the tower, with an urban art piece providing a pop of colour on the entry walls.

CX faced unique challenges as the first project in Edmonton designed and constructed under the new RA9 zoning regulations. In close collaboration with the City of Edmonton, the design team engaged in negotiations to make necessary changes to the zoning that reflected market realities and construction constraints. This included an approach to design an enclosed outdoor amenity space on the roof and have it not count toward building height. The surplus penthouse roof area was transformed into a rooftop amenity space and outdoor view deck, adding an elevated dimension to the urban living experience.

CX stands as a beacon of urban design and innovation, redefining urban living in one of Edmonton's oldest neighbourhoods. Its commitment to fostering community connections, durability, and cost-effectiveness has set new standards for market rental opportunities. Embracing the diverse needs of the community, CX has established a transformational project that prioritize social interaction, aesthetics, and lasting impact.

BIG CITY MOVES NARRATIVE

In a city of two million people, projects like CX exemplify the spirit of the City Plan. As Edmonton strives to create a diverse and vibrant urban landscape, CX emerges as a model development. This project not only offers a broad range of housing types but also contributes to the pedestrian realm and adds a dramatic presence to the city's skyline. Its carefully considered scale fosters community and exemplifies the city's commitment to sustainable growth.



TOP

Aerial view west of CX Tower.

BOTTOM

A podium of townhomes creates an active and vibrant street edge to the development.





LEFT

The tower and townhome podium contribute to the skyline and streetscape.

TOP

Rooftop amenities support urban life and provide residents a perspective on the city.

BOTTOM

A dynamic canopy reaches out to the street, defining a small entry plaza.

INGLEWOOD SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

DESIGN NARRATIVE

The commitment to adequate housing enjoyed without discrimination as a basic human right is at the core of the design thinking behind the Inglewood Supportive Housing project, one of five groundbreaking supportive housing projects. This project offers a safe, inclusive home to some of the city's most vulnerable populations. Located in Inglewood, this project addresses the pre-war neighbourhood context, offering innovative rapid housing solutions for individuals experiencing homelessness.

The Inglewood Supportive Housing provides a mix of 30 studio and one-bedroom units, all crafted to meet rigorous standards of resilience, accessibility, and homelike comfort. Sensitive to the residents' experiences, the residence boasts amenity areas, staff support spaces, medical examination and detoxification rooms, medication management areas, and versatile ceremony and smudging spaces. These specialized spaces are seamlessly integrated into an open main floor that prioritizes security, safety, and connectivity to outdoor spaces. Social enterprise spaces address the corner site, providing engagement with 124 Street.

The funding necessitated volumetric modular construction to address the urgent housing demand—the wood frame modulars are stacked on a flexible concrete main floor. The modulars were site-clad with brick and dark cementitious cladding with wood accents, harmonizing urban context and fostering community integration.

The design prioritized a home-like environment while ensuring durability and safety. Incorporating trauma-informed design principles, the residence features clear sightlines with no dead-end or blind corridors, natural light, sound attenuation, natural materials, and a muted colour palette. These elements collectively promote a calming atmosphere, fostering a sense of belonging for the residents.

Inglewood, along with the four other supportive housing projects, stands as an example of what we can achieve when inclusivity, innovation, and compassion guide the design process. By providing safe, comfortable, and welcoming homes for the community's most vulnerable members, these initiatives reflect the city's commitment to housing those in need. This project sets a precedent for a future where everyone has access to dignified housing, empowering residents with a sense of belonging and reinforcing Edmonton as a compassionate and inclusive city.

BIG CITY MOVES NARRATIVE

As Edmonton grows into a city of two million people, the urgency for adequate housing becomes paramount. This project plays a pivotal role in achieving the city's vision for a more connected, inclusive, and compassionate city. These initiatives work towards improving equity and reducing poverty by providing housing for some of the city's most vulnerable populations. Inglewood Supportive Housing offers an alternative path to traditional development, embodying resilience, energy efficiency, and innovative construction methods.



TOP

View of staff entry and program support spaces off of 112 Avenue.

BOTTOM

View of the main residence entry and amenity space off of 124 Street.





LEFT

Detail view of corner staff space, providing visible security and eyes on the street.

TOP LEFT

View of the 124 Street and 112 Avenue corner with the rooftop amenity space.

TOP RIGHT

View of the modular assembly process for the supportive housing projects.

BOTTOM

View up 112 Avenue towards 124 Street.

T5M CONNECT NORTH GLENORA

The **T5M Connect North Glenora** project is an innovative building creating new housing that is environmentally sustainable, community-oriented, and well-integrated into the neighbourhood. **Creating missing middle housing in a core neighbourhood was a fundamental goal for this project. Through innovative design and thoughtful planning, the project was able to fit the scale of the community while significantly increasing the number of homes on the site. Two single-family home lots were transformed into 16 homes providing housing for 36 people.**

This project uses super-insulation, airtightness, quality windows and doors, and efficient mechanical systems to reach Passive House certification, a first for a multifamily building in Alberta. Air source heat pumps and a solar PV system help reduce carbon impacts by 80% compared to a standard building.

The building includes 1-bedroom suites, 2-bedroom flats, 2-bedroom townhomes, 3-bedroom townhomes, and two units that are fully wheelchair accessible and barrier-free. This mix of unit-types was intentionally included in the design to enable a wide variety of people to live there. The building is now home to people from all stages of life including students, single professionals, young couples, families, and empty-nesters, and the barrier-free units provide much-needed housing for wheelchair users.

In designing this building, a sense of community was important both within the building and with the neighbourhood. The courtyard design and corner-lot orientation ensured that all units are entered from the street, the courtyard, or the side pathway rather than from an internal hallway, connecting residents to the community at large and other community members.

Other design considerations helped to integrate the building into the neighbourhood by ensuring that the building height and setbacks were similar to adjacent structures while also providing a transition to upcoming 4-storey buildings nearby. The rear unit of the building was also lowered in response to the neighbour's concerns about sunlight for her garden.



Note: Solar panels were installed after photos were taken.



BIG CITY MOVES

T5M CONNECT AND THE CITY PLAN

As Edmonton prepares to welcome a million more residents, we need housing that makes full use of existing infrastructure and brings a diverse range of people into existing neighbourhoods while respecting the needs and priorities of people already living there. **T5M Connect North Glenora** demonstrates how economic and cultural innovation and collaboration can create housing that is welcoming, environmentally sustainable, and supportive of the social connections among residents and the larger community of our city.

