

Frequently Asked Questions

Remai Art Gallery of Saskatchewan — Frequently Asked Questions July, 2011

Recently, the City of Saskatoon and the Mendel Art Gallery conducted public surveys seeking opinions on the new Remai Art Gallery of Saskatchewan. The following questions emerged as general themes from the surveys.

1. What was the inspiration for the design of the building?

The architects, in their own words, “responded to the powerful landscape of the prairies, the South Saskatchewan river and the city of Saskatoon.” They also referenced “the simple, clear lines of agrarian buildings” in the province. The whole design aims to maximize the spectacular views of the river. The architects considered the role of the building in the context of River Landing, a place where the city meets the river. The building’s form reflects the many inside uses and activities, as well as the need to wrap around the Remai Arts Centre. The architects reviewed the program components of the new Gallery and the ways in which they could be stacked on the site, while also looking at the area and the different grade elevations from the river shoreline to the riverbank to Second Avenue and finally to the various levels of the Remai Arts Centre. The strategy of stacking long horizontal bars of flexible loft space creates a series of layers both vertically and horizontally.

2. Will there be enough parking? Will the public have to pay for it?

There will be 160 underground stalls in the Gallery and there will be additional pay parking for the public at Parcel Y (across Second Avenue) when it gets developed. There is also pay parking under the Senator Sid Buckwold Bridge. The City has identified revenue from the underground parking as the means to fund the cost of building the parking lot. The Gallery is committed to developing the means to provide free parking for volunteers.

3. Will there be an admission fee to the Gallery?

It is the Gallery’s intention to make all permanent collection exhibitions and most changing exhibitions free of charge. The new building will enable the Gallery to host many touring exhibitions previously unavailable due to limitations of the current facility. Depending on the touring fees charged, there may be fees for these special exhibitions.

4. What will happen to the Mendel Art Gallery building and conservatory?

The City of Saskatoon has commissioned a study called the Kinsmen Park and Area Master Plan to examine the whole area, including re-using the Mendel Art Gallery building. The results will be presented to City Council in the fall of 2011. [Please click here for more details.](#)

5. Where will bicycles be parked?

During the open house on June 22, 2011, the architects heard from the public about the need for bicycle parking. A secure underground bicycle parking area has been allocated in the current plan, and additional bicycle parking sites at street level will be examined further during design development.

6. How are we going to pay for the Gallery?

Funding for construction of the new building has been committed by all levels of Government and a further \$20 million will be raised through a public fundraising campaign. Gallery administration is looking at all aspects of revenue generation, including facility rentals, the Gallery Shop, sponsorship and ongoing fundraising, to offset increased operating costs for the new building.

7. Why is there so much back-of-house space? What is its purpose?

This space is required for the practical business functions of a modern gallery. These include shipping and receiving, restoration, art handling, storage and security. Most of the space is used for storage of the permanent collection, which now numbers some 6,000 works of art. Space is required to coordinate exhibitions in a safe condition, and to handle works of art in a manner that meets strict gallery standards. Finally, provision has been made in the new gallery for future growth of the collection.

8. Will the building be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified?

Yes, the target is LEED Silver certification. Energy efficiency and sustainability were topics that members of the public mentioned at the open house. Following more detailed design work, the next open house in the fall will highlight some of the building's LEED features.

9. Will there be any greenery? Will there be a rooftop garden/patio?

Integration with the River Landing landscape is being developed. The architects are examining all aspects of sustainability, including a green roof and useable rooftop features such as a patio, landscaped sculpture court, and other accessible public space.

10. What are the planned exterior finishing materials? Will they be local materials?

The architects have referenced the copper colour on the roof of the Delta Bessborough Hotel (for the metal mesh over some of the windows), the use of limestone from the region (i.e. Tyndall stone), and the use of wood and glass. The architect team is currently engaged in design development, during which time further analysis of materials will be conducted. Exterior finishes will be shared at the next public information session, scheduled for the fall of 2011.