

# CENTENNIAL COMMUNITY CENTRE AND CANADA GAMES POOL



**IHP6835**

**Established**     1973  
**Size**             12.5 acres  
**location**        65 East Sixth Avenue

**Ammenities**

- On-deck games & seating
  - Green Thunder Water Slide (longest in BC)
  - Olympic sized pool (50 m)
  - Three fitness areas and Aquacize
  - Olympic & spring board diving
  - Sauna and Whirlpool
  - Urban Trails
  - New Westminster Curling Club
- Family Changerooms
  - Teach Pool for tot lessons
  - Centennial Community Centre
  - All-weather field & lights
  - Glenbrook Fire Hall
  - Toddler Playground
  - City Recycling Depo

The site of New Westminster’s first recreation and cultural complex was built on part of the Glenbrook ravine, which stretched from the upper part of the city to the Fraser River. The Glenbrook sewerage scheme of 1912 destroyed the brook underneath the ravine by enclosing the waters in pipes carrying the city’s sewers to the river. The ravine, however, remained intact for decades afterwards, and a high level bridge was needed to span the crossing over Sixth Avenue connecting Sapperton with the rest of the city. Over time, the ravine was used for dumping both garbage and fill, and eventually this natural feature above Sixth Avenue disappeared entirely.



**IHP2234**

The property was owned by the Federal Government for years as part of the B.C. Penitentiary. The City of New Westminster began to acquire the property piece by piece; in 1955 it paid \$9,000 for four and a half acres of the former prison potato field.

The first construction on the site was the new rink of the Royal City Curling Club (established 1955). The club's first ice sheet was on a site adjacent to the Scott Paper factory, which it sold to the company. The curling club began construction of their new location at the corner of Cumberland Street and Sixth Avenue in 1965, and this building was completed in January 1966.

After the formation of a committee to mark Canada's Centennial in 1967, the site beside the new curling club became the focus of new civic development. Federal and provincial funds were being earmarked for new capital projects across the nation, and the City decided that a new recreation and cultural facility would be the city's official Centennial Project. Council approved a budget of \$200,000; the new community centre was quickly designed and built in only one year.



**IHP7898**

The centre was still being finished when it was officially opened on May 14, 1967 in time for the May Festival. Mayor Stu Gifford unveiled a bronze plaque in the centre's ultra-modern lobby before 350 guests. The centre was profiled in the local British Columbian newspaper boasting features such as its "all-purpose auditorium which could seat 450, and is equipped with a stage suitable for concerts and small production plays. The auditorium can be converted into a gymnasium suitable for gymnastics, basketball, badminton, volley ball and other indoor sporting events. ... The basement portion of the building has been especially designed for sports such as judo, wrestling, weight lifting and tumbling."

A large section of the centre was devoted to the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame, opened by the Mayor on May 17, 1967. The facility received a large addition, including the "River Room," completed in July, 1979 at a cost of \$300,000.

The City of New Westminster and the Municipality of Burnaby jointly won the bid to host the Canada Summer Games in 1973. New Westminster used its portion of the Federal funds provided as part of the bid to complete an "Olympic-standard swimming and diving pool." The site chosen to create a comprehensive recreational complex was adjacent to the Centennial Community Centre. The pool - one of the largest in the country - was architecturally unique, incorporating eleven monumental laminated wood beams, 6,000 board feet of laminated timbers and 40,000 square feet of wood roof decking.

The Canada Games Pool was officially opened by Mayor Muni Evers on March 9, 1973, with 800 guests in attendance. Nova Scotia's Canada Games Pool, host of the previous national event, contributed a bottle of their pool water, which the Mayor ceremonially poured into the new pool.

The Canada Summer Games were a financial and community success and left the city with a tremendous civic legacy. Over the years, the pool has been continuously maintained and upgraded to meet the community's needs. In 1983, the mezzanine floor, a former community meeting area, was converted to an exercise and weight room. 1984 saw the installation of the Lightning Chute Waterslide, the first indoor slide in BC, replaced in 2008 with Green Thunder, the longest indoor slide in BC. The pool and its facilities continue to be a major amenity for city residents.