

# The Buildings of Dalhousie University

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## Ira MacNab (A) Building & Addition

Address: 1360 Barrington St.

Start Date: November 20, 1959    Completion Date: January 1961

Architect: C. A. Fowler and Company (architectural firm)    Renovation Date(s): July 1971; October 1977; 1978/79; 1986-88; July 1992

Contractor: Foundation Maritime Limited



A & B Buildings - Exterior - Rear, n.d.



Ira P. MacNab Building - Administration and Library - Exterior, n.d.



Ira P. MacNab Building - Administration and Library - Exterior, n.d.

### Building History

Work began the Nova Scotia Technical College's A, B and C Buildings on November 20, 1959; provincial Minister of Public Works Stephen T. Pyke had announced the awarding of the building contract earlier that week. The 58,000 square foot, three-wing addition to the Macdonald (D) Building was designed by the Halifax architectural firm C.A. Fowler and Company - which was formed by an alumnus of the College - constructed by Foundation Maritime Limited and budgeted at \$830,000. The three-story MacNab (A) Building was completed in January of 1961, made of curtain wall concrete frame waffle slab construction with a brick exterior.

The building runs parallel to Barrington Street and serves as an administration wing. It originally housed: a boardroom and the offices of the College's President, Bursar and Registrar on its ground floor; staff offices, the Alumni Funds Office, the faculty room, the telephone switchboard and a large lecture room on its second floor; a large lecture room and the College's library on its third floor; plus a duplicating room, telephone equipment, a heat exchanger and storage space in the basement. All Mechanical Engineering facilities (except its heat-engine lab) were moved to the appropriate spaces in the newly- constructed MacNab and B Buildings.

In the summer of 1961, the College's library was moved into the third floor of the MacNab Building, from the first floor of the Macdonald (D) Building. In 1969, more space was made available for the library on the second floor.

In the summer of 1966, the Atlantic Region Work Study Office moved from the second floor of the MacNab Building into the Hart House (K Building), making more office space available for the Department of Industrial Engineering.

In July 1971, after the College's Faculty Club lounge moved into the Sexton House (E Building), the vacated space - plus classroom A-301 - was converted into a Reading Room for the library.

n.d.

In October 1977, a new student lounge, called the 'T-Room', was built in room A-222 on the second floor of the building, in the prior location of the College's Faculty Club, thanks mainly to the generosity of an anonymous donor and to funds provided by alumnus J. Don Wilson (Mechanical Engineering, 1948), who also organized some of his old classmates to assist in the construction and fundraising for the project. Around that time, the library's Reading Room was moved to the B Building.

In September 1978, the College established the Campus Design Centre (originally called the 'Campus Design Studio'), headed by Campus Design Coordinator Prof. Larry Richards (of the School of Architecture) and official Assistant Mr. Eric Fiss, aided by architecture students in the School's co-operative program. This new department was mandated to design the College's new physical and aesthetic developments (i.e. buildings, renovations, outdoor space, interior design) in a manner consistent with a Comprehensive Campus Plan developed by the Centre's staff.

One of the renovation projects based on the Centre's designs which began during the 1978/79 academic year - concluding the following academic year - was the provision of the library with additional stack space and shelving, a new mezzanine, the remodeling and reorganization required to improve the reading space and a rejuvenated interior look.

The Student Amenities Building Project fundraising was led by Alumni Association President Mr. Gerry Belliveau, and it was a Capital Funding Project under the TUNS (formerly Nova Scotia Tech) 1990 Fund umbrella rather than under that of the College's Continuing (Annual Giving) Fund. In January 1985, the 1990 Fund/Development Office and TUNS' Alumni Association co-sponsored a telethon which appealed to approximately 700 alumni and raised \$20,000. Among other fundraising efforts, a Fun Run was held on March 31, 1985, and it also met with success.

On December 4, 1985, Dr. Sexton's widow, Mrs. Anne Sexton, broke ground on the site of Phase One of the Student Amenities Building project, with the same silver shovel she used 22 years earlier to turn the first sod for the F.H Sexton Memorial Gymnasium (J) Building. Assisting Mrs. Sexton was Dr. H.W.L. Doane, Honourary President of the TUNS Alumni Association, the Hon. Tom McInnis, Nova Scotia's Minister of Education, and Ms. Sandra Crockett, TUNS Student Union President. The first phase of this building project was budgeted at just over \$2 million. This roughly 21,000 square-foot addition was built between the Sexton Gym building and the MacNab (A) Building and was completed in 1986.

The official opening on January 21, 1987 was attended by: Dr. John M. Buchanan, Premier of Nova Scotia; Dr. Harvey W.L. Doane, the Honourary President of the TUNS Alumni Association; the Hon. John Buchanan, Premier of Nova Scotia; Dr. J. Clair Callaghan, President of TUNS; Ms. Sandra Crockett, TUNS Student Union President; Ms. Joan Parsons- Doehler, TUNS Alumni Association President; and Mr. Gordon Mader, Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee of TUNS' Board of Governors. The project was funded by the TUNS Alumni Association, the Windsor Foundation and from private sector contributions to the TUNS 1990 Fund, which was dedicated to advancing technical education and research.

During the 1986/87 academic year, the T-Room was moved to the Sexton Memorial Gymnasium (J) Building. The vacated space in the MacNab Building was converted to The Honorable Robert H. Winters Board and Senate Room, named after the Nova Scotia Technical College's first appointed Chancellor, who died before his installation.

During the 1987/88 academic year, some classroom space in the B Building plus some existing library space was modified to create an extension for the library with 40 additional study spaces and enough extra stack space to hold 8,800 volumes. The extension project was designed by the Campus Design Centre, built by the TUNS Physical Plant staff and was officially opened on February 29, 1988 by TUNS Board Chairman W. H. Gates and TUNS Student Union President Colin Dickson. The extension's second phase quickly followed and provided 26 more study spaces and stack space for another 10,000 volumes.

In July 1992, as part of a \$3 million campus construction project built by J.W. Lindsay Enterprises Ltd., the MacNab (A) Building became linked to the Sexton Gymnasium (J Building) by a skylit stairway. The MacNab Building was also provided with a larger space for the campus bookstore and a new printing centre. Now, an internal walkway which begins at Barrington Street passes through the Sexton Gymnasium (J) Building and past the MacNab Building's new printing centre and campus bookstore to a foyer for both the NcNab and B Buildings which also houses the office of the Dean of Engineering. The foyer allows access to a new elevator and a stairway - skylit from above - to both the NcNab Building's library and the B Building's new second floor classrooms, as well as to the computer centre and new student/alumni lounge on the main floor. Following the walkway westward leads to a foyer which links the C (Electrical Engineering) and Macdonald (D) Buildings and finally to the parking areas outside. The official opening of the addition on December 9, 1992 was attended by Nova Scotia Premier Don Cameron, President of the TUNS Alumni Association Mr. Garth Mallett and members of the business community.

The A Building was named after Dr. Ira Percy MacNab. Born in the mid-1880s in Malagash, NS, Dr. MacNab was a 1913 Mechanical Engineering graduate of Nova Scotia Technical College who worked at a series of managerial and executive jobs in the engineering profession outside of Halifax before returning to the city in 1931 to join the Nova Scotia Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities. In 1947, Dr. MacNab was appointed General Manager of the Public Service Commission.

Apart from his work in the engineering field, Dr. MacNab contributed to the profession with his activities in such organizations as the Engineering Institute of Canada, the Association of Professional Engineers and Dominion Council of Professional Engineers, becoming president of all three over time. Dr. MacNab was a member of the Maritime Branch of the American Water Works and was awarded that association's highest honour - the George Warren Fuller Memorial Award - for distinguished service in the field of water supply. His community work included executive positions on the Nova Scotia Accident Prevention Association, the Halifax Board of Trade and the Board of the Children's Hospital, along with involvement in the activities of the Kiwanis Club and the City of Halifax's City Planning and Civil Defense Committees. Dr. MacNab served on both the Board of Regents of Mount Allison University - which granted him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1950 -

and the Board of Governors of the College, which granted him an honorary Doctor of Engineering degree in 1954. Dr. MacNab was also the Honorary President of the College's Alumni Association when he died on September 15, 1970 in Halifax, NS, at the age of 86.

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Ira P. MacNab Building - Administration and Library, n.d.

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Ira P. MacNab Building - Administration and Library - Exterior - Winter, February 1988



Library - Reading Area, 1978



Library Expansion Opening - February 29, 1988



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