

The Buildings of Dalhousie University

President's Residence

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Address: 1460 Oxford St.

Start Date: Completion Date: pre-1925

Architect: Renovation Date(s): 1925; 1959; 1981;
2005

Contractor:

Building History



Drawing of President's Residence,
1982?

Dalhousie's President's Residence was acquired by the university in 1925 using a \$20,000 donation given for the purpose by R. B. Bennett. Bennett was a graduate of the Law school, member of Dalhousie's Board of Governors for close to twenty years, and Prime Minister of Canada from 1930 to 1935.

The President's Residence estate originally belonged to a West Indian merchant named Levi Hart. Hart acquired sections of the property over time in the 1860s. He lived in the house until his death in 1907, after which time his wife, and daughter and her family stayed on.

After the house was purchased by Dalhousie from Hart's son-in-law, it was home to three successive presidents: A. Stanley Mackenzie (1925-1931), Carleton W. Stanley (1931- 1945) and A. E. Kerr (1945-1963). When Henry Hicks became President in 1963, he chose to remain in his former home at 6446 Coburg Street. The President's Residence was converted into offices which housed the Psychology department, then Education.

In the early 1980s, the house was thoroughly renovated at a cost of \$420,000, returning to its former use as the residence of the President. In 1994, a report of the Budget Advisory Committee recommended that the building be sold. Some saw the Residence as an extravagant and unnecessary source of expenditure. Others argued, though, that it was an important alternative to the Faculty Club for hosting events and receptions. In 1995, the Board of Governors decided to keep the President's Residence, on the condition that it be used extensively for social events like entertaining visiting dignitaries.

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