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Architecture (H) Building

Address: 5410 Spring Garden Rd.

Start Date: 1908 Completion Date: 1909

Architect: Herbert E. Gates
Renovation Date(s): 1927/28; 1931;
1961-63; 1965; 1970 & more (see text)

Contractor:
Falconer and
MacDonald



Architecture Building - Exterior, n.d.



Architecture Building - Addition -
Exterior, n.d.

Building History

The H Building, the former main building on the Nova Scotia Technical College/Technical University of Nova Scotia's campus was designed in neoclassical style by architect Herbert E. Gates - with fine-detail, large-scale drawings done by Frederick M. Burton - and built by contractors Falconer and MacDonald of Sydney, NS. The cornerstone was laid on August 20, 1908, by the Hon. D.C. Fraser, Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia. Speakers for the occasion included the Hon. George H. Murray, Premier of Nova Scotia and Principal R.A. Faulkner, University of Toronto.

The building itself was 40 feet long and 160 feet wide. It was completed on September 24, 1909 and officially opened on September 28, 1909.

The H Building's top floor held the College's assembly hall, while the basement had a common room for students. The hall held all of the College's annual convocation ceremonies until 1947, when the size of the graduating class precipitated the move of the ceremonies to the auditorium of the School of the Blind (Baker 6). In 1950, the convocation ceremonies were held in the gymnasium at Dalhousie University, and they continued to be held there until the completion of the F.H. Sexton Memorial Gymnasium (J Building) in 1963.

By the 1927/1928 academic year, the Electrical Machinery laboratory had become too small to accommodate larger class sizes. To remedy this, the walls of the reading room which separated the Electrical Measurements and Electrical Machinery laboratories were torn out to create a single, large L-shaped room for the electrical laboratories which extended across the eastern end of the building's first floor. The new room was then repainted, reorganized and equipped with a great amount of new machinery. The College's former radio room became the new reading room. Also around this time, the building's stores room was relocated elsewhere in the basement, and its old space was used to house a new cement testing lab.



Nova Scotia Technical College - Main Building - Front - Exterior, n.d.

A new addition housing a gymnasium was completed in 1931, constructed on the building's rear (south) side, between its two wings. The College's President, Dr. F.H. Sexton, sponsored the project and drew up the plans and specifications himself, while Prof. S.J. Montgomery of the Mechanical Engineering was in charge of the addition's erection. This new building was 75 feet long, 34 feet wide and 15 feet high. The new gymnasium was intended to be finished in time for the next basketball season, but delays in both the completion of the floor and the installation of the baskets prevented it. "During the excavation, two old cannon[s] were unearthed," weighing nine and 12.5 tons respectively (Cameron and Cameron 16). These "relic[s] of early Halifax . . . were reburied," as there was no room for them in the Provincial Museum of Science (Cameron and Cameron 16). In 1959, these cannons were excavated and moved to the Halifax Citadel.

During the 1947/48 academic year, the College became dissociated from the Correspondence Division of the Province of Nova Scotia's Department of Technical Education, and its former office in the Main Building became a classroom. In turn, the building's Classroom A became the Office of the Registrar and the senior Electronic Engineering classes that the move displaced were held elsewhere on campus. Also around this time, the College's Accountant's Office became the Office of the Bursar.

In 1952, with the conversion of the Sexton House (E Building) to an administration building, the Offices of the President, Registrar and Bursar were moved there. The first floor of the Main Building became the domain of Electrical Engineering Department and its laboratory space, and also housed the Provincial Museum of Science.

In 1961, the top floor was completely renovated to accommodate the School of Architecture, which opened in the fall. The School's official opening was held on November 1, 1961, attended by Nova Scotia Premier Robert L. Stanfield, College President George W. Holbrook, Mr. Douglas Shadbolt, Director of the School of Architecture and Mr. John Darby, President of the Nova Scotia Association of Architects.

During the course of the 1962/63 academic year, a new lecture room and an exhibition room were added for the School of Architecture, and the Mining and Metallurgical Engineering Department's Assaying Laboratory was moved into the Murray (G) Building as part of the eventual consolidation of that department into one building.

During the summer of 1963, the provincial Department of Public Works supervised an extensive remodeling of the west wing's second floor, which had been occupied by the Provincial Museum of Science but was ceded to the School of Architecture when the museum was relocated off-campus.

The H Building's gymnasium was converted to a 150-seat auditorium/theatre in 1965 for showing films and holding guest lectures, based on the designs of Prof. O. Biskaps of the School of

Architecture.

In 1970, with the move of the Provincial Museum of Science to its new facility, the building was remodeled to suit the Faculty of Architecture's needs, including studios, workshops, laboratories and offices. Under the guidance of newly appointed Campus Planner, Mr. Frank J.T. Eppell, all of the building's electrical and mechanical systems were replaced, and new partitions, staircases, windows and doors are made and installed. An exhibition room was added; and the interior was completely renovated. However, the building's exterior retained its early-1900s appearance. The renovation was based on designs made by School of Architecture professors Douglas Shadbolt and A.J. Donahue, in conjunction with a local architect.

The renovation project cost \$517,702 (originally budgeted at \$475,000), with the contract awarded to Fundy Construction Co. of Halifax, NS. The construction was delayed due to strikes by the carpenters, labourers, and electrical and sheet metal workers, causing the temporary loss of use of the Architecture Building. Until the end of the work stoppage and the completion of the renovations, the School of Architecture operated in both the B Building and rented quarters on Barrington Street. The official re-opening of the building was held on February 11, 1971, attended by the Hon. Scott MacNutt, provincial Minister of Housing, Dr. A.E. Steeves, the College's Director of Administration, and Dr. Peter Manning, the School of Architecture's Director.

Over the course of 1974 to 1976, both the exhibition room and the building's darkroom facilities were enlarged and new office and storage space was made by renovating existing corridor space.

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 and interior design) in a manner consistent with a Comprehensive Campus Plan developed by the Centre's staff.

Two of the renovation projects based on the Centre's designs which proceeded during the 1978/79 academic year were the provision of space for the New Department of Urban and Rural Planning and the conversion of the former School of Architecture Grad Lab into quarters for the Department of Graduate Studies/Research, which moved into that redesigned space in April of 1979.

During the 1983/84 academic year, renovations were done to the building's administrative area; during the 1984/85 academic year, the building's brickwork and windows were repointed.

An international competition was held in 1990 for designs for an addition to the Architecture Building which would alleviate overcrowding and offer space for exhibitions, group discussions and public meetings. The winning design, by Brian MacKay-Lyons - a 1978 graduate of the then-Nova Scotia Technical College's (now Technical University of Nova Scotia) School of Architecture - was an innovative work which exposes the building's layers of construction, including its steel structure. In early 1992, the Weston Canada Foundation - a Toronto-based organization dedicated to funding

medical research and construction projects at hospitals and universities - donated \$200,000 towards the construction of an addition to the Architecture Building. The additional funding required to complete the addition was provided by the Harold Crabtree Foundation, the McLean Foundation, Lydon Lynch Architects, with contributions from alumni, faculty, architecture students and several firms.

The addition was completed in early 1993 and was first opened to the public in March 1993 with an exhibition entitled "The First Generation: TUNS Architecture Graduates 1965-1992". The addition itself was named "A New Room for Architecture" and officially opened on September 24, 1993, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony officiated by Nova Scotia Premier John Savage. Also in attendance were W. Garfield Mitchell of the Weston Foundation, TUNS President Dr. Don Roy and Dr. Ivan Duvar, Chairman of the TUNS Board of Directors.

The H Building had an elevator installed in 1999, and both exhibition and studio space were added in 2002. Beginning in 2003, more work was done, including alterations to the front entrance/main lobby, and renovations to its Planning Studio. The two projects were combined, for minimal disruption to teaching activities, and both were necessary to upgrade the aging building to current standards. Funding for the front entrance/main lobby renovation - and more - was provided by a generous donation from local businessman Mr. Ralph M. Medjuck, QC, whose \$2.5 million donation was used towards all manner of improvements to the Architecture Building. Project architect Niall Savage interpreted Mr. Medjuck's vision for the renovations, which were carried out by DORA Construction. Carolyn Green was both the designer for the Planning Studio alterations and Facilities Management's Project Leader for the two projects.

On September 13, 2005, the H Building will be renamed the 'Ralph M. Medjuck Building of Architecture and Planning'.

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Architecture Building - Exterior - Front
- 1, n.d.



Official Opening of School of
Architecture (H-Building) after
Completion of Renovations - February
11, 1971



School of Architecture - Exterior -
Winter, n.d.

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