

The Buildings of Dalhousie University

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A. L. Macdonald (D) Building

Address: 1360 Barrington St.

Start Date: 1950 Completion Date: 1951

Architect: C. St. John Wilson Renovation Date(s): January 1961; 1976-79; 1981; 1983-85; 1992

Contractor: Fundy Construction Company



A.L. Macdonald Building (Civil Engineering, Canadian Institute of Fisheries Technology and Centre for Water Resources Studies) - Exterior - Front, November 1957



A.L. Macdonald Building (Civil Engineering, Canadian Institute of Fisheries Technology and Centre for Water Resources Studies) - Exterior - Front (angled view), November 1957

Building History

Over the 1948/49 academic year, plans for the Macdonald (D) Building were drawn by architect Mr. C. St. John Wilson. The construction work was contracted to the Fundy Construction Company, began in 1950 and was completed in 1951.

The D Building is a three-story structure of reinforced flat slab concrete design which was originally designed and built to house offices, lecture halls and drafting rooms for the Civil and Metallurgical Engineering Departments, plus a machine shop on the ground floor, the Nova Scotia Technical College's library as well as laboratories for materials testing, hydraulics & marine engineering and physical metallurgy (Cameron and Cameron 20, Baker 8). The top (third) floor had one large drafting room which could accommodate 125 students and a second, smaller one for senior civil engineering students, plus faculty offices. The second floor housed the physical metallurgy labs, two classrooms, a boardroom plus the necessary offices. The ground floor held three civil engineering labs and strength of materials lab which partially extended into the basement, which itself held concrete and hydraulics labs.

In 1951, the physical metallurgical labs were moved from the Murray (G) Building to the Macdonald Building and stayed there until 1966, when they returned to the Murray Building due to limited building space in the Macdonald Building.

In 1953, the Civil Engineering drafting rooms and classrooms were transferred from the second floor of the F (Engineering Laboratories) Building to the MacDonald Building.

In January 1961, three new units attached to the Macdonald Building were completed and occupied. Also during that year, the College's library relocated to the third (top) floor of the newly-constructed administrative A Building.



Macdonald (D) Building under construction during the building of the Nova Scotia Technical College's new administration complex, c1960-61

In 1966, the metallurgical labs relocated from the MacDonald Building back to the Murray (G) Building when an extension added to the F (engineering laboratories) Building allowed the Chemical Engineering Department to leave the space it occupied in the Murray Building - the metallurgical labs simply moved into the space that the Chemical Engineering Department vacated.

During the 1968/69 academic year, the Bernard N. Cain timber structures engineering laboratory extension (Q Building) was completed and the Department of Civil Engineering moved equipment into it. As a result, the area vacated by the machine shop in the Macdonald Building was used to establish laboratories for building construction, plastics and structures testing.

From 1976 to early 1977, the Macdonald Building underwent renovations and enlargements to accommodate both larger enrollments of engineering students and the Industrial Engineering Department. This entailed the addition of two stories and the construction of the N Building adjacent to the northwest side of the building for the Bio-Resources (Agricultural) Engineering Department, as well as the recladding of the entire D Building with brick. One of the completed floors was occupied by the Industrial Engineering Department as well as the Environmental Laboratories and the Environmental Resource Centre for work in Civil Engineering. However, the higher of the two new floors was not completed until the 1977/78 academic year due to funding problems, although the Civil Engineering Department was able to occupy office, laboratory and classroom space on the floor in the meantime.

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 was the provision of the Fisheries Research and Technology Laboratory, a related process and engineering pilot plant and office space for the College's new Fisheries Engineering program. This entailed the renovation and equipping of a total of 8,000 square feet of space on the Macdonald Building's third and fifth floors, plus the erection of a 1,000 square-foot mezzanine floor funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Mines and Energy. The new laboratory was equipped with gear made available by: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, resulting from the dissolution of its Halifax Fisheries Technology Branch; the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries; Fisheries Products Ltd. of St. John's, NL; and National Sea Products Ltd. of Halifax. The facilities were completed and operational for the summer of 1979. A low-temperature facility, funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and a \$90,000 equipment grant from the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), constructed on the north end of the Electrical Engineering (C) Building's roof

and extending into the Macdonald Building, was completed in 1981.

At the south end of the Macdonald Building's third floor, 1600 square feet of space was constructed and renovated to accommodate the computer-controlled cold room; this area would also be used for storage and the housing of larger pieces of equipment. The Laboratory was officially opened by Federal Labour Minister Gerald Regan on February 27, 1981, the first day of a two-day event during which the facility opened its doors to the press, the public and representatives from the fishing industry. The opening, chaired by Technical University of Nova Scotia President J. Clair Callaghan, also featured remarks from Nova Scotia Minister of Fisheries Edmund Morris and Mr. Ken Campbell, President of the Fisheries Council of Canada.

Over the 1983/84 and 1984/85 academic years, additional laboratory facilities were constructed for the Canadian Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT, which the Fisheries Research and Technology Laboratory changed its name to in August 1982) on the Macdonald Building's third floor.

In July 1992, as part of a \$3 million campus construction project, the Electrical Engineering (C) and the Macdonald Building received a shared foyer which links their classrooms, labs and offices and gives access to the parking area to the west of the buildings. The official opening on December 9, 1992 was attended by Nova Scotia Premier Don Cameron, Mr. Garth Mallett, the President of the TUNS Alumni Association, and members of the business community.

The D Building was named after the late Honourable Angus Lewis Macdonald, former Premier of Nova Scotia, who served for three years as the Chairman of the Board of Governors for the Nova Scotia Technical College.

Born on August 10, 1890 in Dunvegan, NS, Mr. Macdonald was a World War I veteran, a lawyer and a professor with a doctorate from Harvard Law School, Macdonald won the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia's first leadership convention in 1930 and became Premier in 1933 after taking the Conservative provincial government to court over its recently-passed Franchise Act and the effect it had on the registered voters' list. While in office, Macdonald put the federal Old Age Pension Act into force, aided farmers affected by the Great Depression by finding new markets for their produce and passed the first Trade Union Act, which declared that workers had the right to both form trade unions and engage in collective bargaining.

Macdonald's Liberals were re-elected in 1937, and in 1939, Macdonald was persuaded to help with the World War II effort on a federal level and became Minister of National Defence for Naval Services in 1940, remaining so until the war's end in 1945. Macdonald returned to provincial politics shortly thereafter; his government's further accomplishments included the creation of the first provincial education department and the successful undertaking of such projects as the bridge between Halifax and Dartmouth which bears his name and the Canso causeway which links Cape Breton to mainland Nova Scotia. Macdonald remained Premier through to the early 1950s, despite his ailing health. At the time of his death on April 13, 1953 in Halifax, he was hailed in the press as "the most beloved Nova Scotia statesman and scholar since Joseph Howe."

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