

# The Buildings of Dalhousie University

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## Howe Hall, PCPC, University Health

Address: 6230 Coburg Rd.

Start Date: 1959

Completion Date: 1960

Architect: Mathers &  
Haldenby; Duffus, Romans &  
Single

Renovation Date(s):  
1964; 1967; 2001;  
2004

Contractor: Kenney  
Construction Company,  
Limited



Howe Hall looking northeast, 1985



Howe Hall and Adjacent Buildings,  
n.d.



Howe Hall exterior, October 1977

### Building History

Howe Hall, known for much of its history as the Men's Residence, was a long-awaited and much needed addition to the Studley campus. After World War II, housing in Halifax was limited, and the men's building at the time was a "temporary" one erected by the Department of National Defense to house naval officers during the war. Dalhousie's governors were anticipating increased enrolment through the 1960s as the Baby Boom generation reached university age. Howe Hall's site had been reserved for a residence since the original campus plan was created in 1912.

In 1955 the Dalhousie Expansion Appeal directed ten percent of every donation towards the Men's Residence. The Dalhousie Alumni Fund, created by the Alumni Association in 1955, aimed to raise \$100,000 towards building costs. In 1957 federal government grants through the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation at last made construction possible. Howe Hall cost over \$1.5 million, of which \$500,000 was supplied by the university.

Tenders were called in March 1959, and the project was contracted to Kenny Construction Company Limited. On October 28, 1959, the cornerstone was laid by Chancellor C.D. Howe. The man whose name would eventually be affixed to the building was Dalhousie's first Chancellor. He was appointed in 1957 and served until his death in 1960. Howe was an energetic, influential man of vision who engineered many changes at Dalhousie, reinvigorating it during a period of strapped resources, competing priorities and an unpopular president.

The original Howe Hall was designed by the Toronto firm of Mathers & Haldenby, which had also designed the Henry Hicks Academic Building and the Sir James Dunn Science Building. It was a U-shaped building with a quadrangle facing the western side of campus. Smith House and Bronson House were the two original wings. The building was made of Lake Echo shale, a softer stone than the ironstone in the other campus buildings. With a capacity of

150, the plans included an efficient cafeteria, chapel, common room and library. The "Men's Residence" opened in January 1961. Students thereafter would refer to it impishly as the Done Inn and Anonymous Hall. In 1964, when the university was able to acquire the adjacent property at the corner of LeMarchant Street and Coburg Road, the northeast Henderson wing was added. The new rooms featured coordinated draperies and linens and paintings supplied by the Dalhousie Art Gallery. University Health Services is today located on the ground floor of Henderson.

Cameron House, a second addition costing \$2 million, opened in 1967. It includes a second dining room. In 1975, in the face of a housing crunch, Dalhousie purchased the small Studley Apartments building, to be part of Howe Hall, and converted it into rooms for 52 students. A third new wing, Fountain House, opened in 2002; the \$7.5 million addition closed the quadrangle at the west end of the building. It added 201 new residence rooms, bringing Howe Hall's total capacity to 707 undergraduate students. Henderson, Cameron and Studley Houses remained men's residences into the 1990s, while Bronson and Smith became co-ed. By 2005, only the first floor of Cameron House was still reserved for men.

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Howe Hall - Aerial Shot, n.d.



Howe Hall - Exterior - Buildings and  
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1977

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Men's Residence - Construction, 1959



Mural by Guyanese artist Aubrey Williams commissioned by Prime Minister Forbes Burnham who received an honorary degree from Dalhousie (the mural is hung in the main dining hall), May 1978



Howe Hall Men's Residence Under Construction, December 14, 1959



Howe Hall Men's Residence, ca. 1960s

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