

The Buildings of Dalhousie University

Eliza Ritchie Hall

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Address: 6250 South St.

Start Date: Fall 1986

Completion Date:

Summer 1987

Architect: John Preston and Associates

Renovation Date(s):

Contractor:



New Women's Residence Under Construction, May 6, 1987



New 80-Bed Women's Residence Under Construction, May 6, 1987

Building History

Eliza Ritchie Hall is a traditional dormitory-style residence that was built in 1986-1987. It was a women's residence at first, until 1990 when it became one of the first two residences at Dalhousie to go co-ed. The residence houses ninety-two students in three sections. There are some double but mostly single rooms, the latter reserved for the senior undergraduate and graduate students who make up the majority of residents.

The residence is named for one of the first Canadian women to earn a Ph.D. Eliza Ritchie graduated from Dalhousie with a Bachelor of Letters in 1887 and received a Ph.D. from Cornell in 1889. From 1890 to 1900 she taught psychology and philosophy at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. Returning to Halifax, she was a vocal advocate of the advancement of women, the first female member of the Board of Governors, a founding member of the editorial board of the *Dalhousie Review*, and the first woman to receive an honorary degree from Dalhousie (LL.D., 1927). Ritchie also served as the first warden of Dalhousie's first women's residence, a house the university rented called Forrest Hall. She was one of the first to assert that Dalhousie needed to build a large residence for its women students in order to provide them the same comforts and supervision they would get at home; this need was realized in Sherriff Hall, built in 1922.

Eliza Ritchie Hall was designed by architect Ted Brown of John Preston & Associates. Student suggestions were taken into account in planning the features and amenities of the rooms. The building features study rooms, a multi-purpose room, computer lab, reception area, lounges with kitchenettes, and laundry facilities.

Construction began in the fall of 1986. Eliza Ritchie Hall was built during a housing shortage, although its spaces only served to replace those lost from several residence houses and Ardmore Hall, both sold by the university at that time. Its official opening took place on October 20, 1987, with distinguished guests John M. Buchanan, Nova Scotia Premier; Gerald McCarthy, Deputy Minister of Education; and Stewart McInnes, Minister of Public Works.

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