

The Buildings of Dalhousie University

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Nova Scotia Archives & Records Management Building

Address: 6016 University Av.

Start Date: May 1978

Completion Date: Spring 1980

Architect: Keith, Napier & Associates

Renovation Date(s):

Contractor:



N.S. Public Archives Building,
November 1980



Nova Scotia Public Archives Building,
n.d.

Building History

The building of Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM), formerly the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, was the second home of the institution. Since its founding in 1931 the Archives had been located in what is now called the Chase Building on the Dalhousie campus. By the 1970s, however, the conditions there were not up to standard. The building had become too small to house the archives' holdings, with records being stored in closets and off-site warehouses. The many windows had exposed records to harmful UV light and they were suffering from inappropriate storage and preservation.

In 1977 the Nova Scotia government made a trade with Dalhousie, acquiring the university's property on the corner of Robie Street and University Avenue in exchange for relinquishing the old building. The new archives was designed by architectural firm Keith, Graham, Napier & Associates. It cost about \$4 million and was specially designed with few windows in the reading areas and spacious vault areas that were less than one-half full and would allow for significant expansion. The building includes a conservation lab, a photography lab and an exhibition room, and was equipped for a future solar heating system.

The construction of the new Archives aroused some controversy because it was to be built where the Carleton House student lounge then stood. Health Professions students had fought for four years to get a social space that would serve the Carleton campus as the Student Union Building served Studley. The Dalhousie Student Union invested several thousand dollars renovating the house, which opened in the spring of 1977. When it emerged that Carleton House would be demolished to make way for the archives, some students protested, however Carleton House was ultimately used so little that it was closed by 1978 anyway.

Construction began on the archives in May 1978 and it opened in

April 1980. Today NSARM, in addition to providing reference services to researchers, acquires, manages and preserves historical and government records of importance to the province of Nova Scotia.

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References

Photographs

PR Photos

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