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DAWSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

The original Dawson Memorial Hospital was built in 1920, as J. Kenneth Dawson, of the celebrated merchant family, had bequeathed \$20,000 for the creation of a hospital in Bridgewater; the closest being in Halifax. It stood on what is now Exhibition Drive, just around the corner from Dufferin Street, approximately where the Police Station is today. Both the Town of Bridgewater and the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg matched the generous gift, contributing \$20,000 each as stipulated. The Town later contributed \$8,000 more and the Municipality \$3,000 more, bringing the total cost to \$71,000. Refurbished, re-equipped, and renovated over the years, it eventually grew crowded despite the construction of other South Shore hospitals, and a new hospital, given the same name, was built around the corner on Dufferin Street. This has presently been converted to office space, notably home to the Resolve call centre.

After the 1966 construction of a new hospital, the old one still played a key role, housing laundry services, the Mental Health department, the Auxiliary, and other community associations such as the Canadian Cancer Society and Alcoholics Anonymous. It was demolished in 1982, as it became clear that an even larger hospital would be needed.

With the demolition, the town lost one of the last-built grand buildings that were built before the introduction of modern styles of architecture. This building was built in

what can best be described as the Arts and Crafts style; however, as the style had many sub-styles, or themes, this best displays the Tuscan manifestation of the style. Immediately noticeable was the large, central pavilion, projecting outwards from the two wings. It had an eye-catching complex Mansard roof; the lower slope being a shallow, hipped roof, the upper portion a hipped-gable roof. This pavilion was very much accentuated, leading to a pillared portico and a side-lit large entrance door. The second storey window had a Tuscan arch above it, and the balcony in front has a spindle-work railing typical of the late 19th century Stick style, though also common in Arts and Crafts buildings. The roof was punctuated by a large Palladian dormer, and was flanked by two asymmetrically large chimneys.

On the right side of the centre pavilion was a shorter wing, with a projecting picture window at its far end, and on the left is a longer wing, complete with two triple windows that create a very sunlit facade. These are centred beneath two Palladian dormers. Behind each is a varied style of chimney or air vent. At the end of this wing is a projecting hipped roof projection, slightly shorter than the main wing, with a front-facing triple window itself. This projection's roof, was also coloured the same as the wall to blend in. Both wings, however, had similar hipped- gable roofs with the gables at the side, as well as deeply overhanging eaves with many dentils. Dentils also occur underneath the roof of the entrance portico, very much serving their purpose to mimic beams and rafters. Despite having a sense of symmetry within each section to create order, the asymmetrical feel of the Arts and Crafts' down to earth movement is felt with the mismatched wings. It was a very welcoming, cheerful, hospital.

From *Bridgewater Hospitals* and *Dawson Memorial Hospital* Reference Files