

Favorite Buildings On Campus



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My Favorite Buildings On Campus

This article will be discussing some of my favorite buildings in the Virginia Tech campus.

Shanks Hall

My thoughts on Shanks Hall

Figure 1. Outside of Shanks Hall (via vt.edu)



History of the Building

Shanks Hall was first built in 1902, and named after David Carey Shanks Jr. It was originally a

dorm building, before it was renovated in the 90s to become the home for the English and Communications departments. The most recent remodel was completed in 2001.

What I Like About the Building

Shanks is home for both of my majors (Creative Writing and Professional & Technical Writing), so I have most of my classes here nowadays. Having a lot of classes in one building tends to get one somewhat attached to it - as long as the building isn't terrible. There is also a free book exchange shelf on the third floor, so that's cool. I haven't found anything I want there yet, but I need to check more often.

The classrooms are nice. They have decent technology, and most importantly they are perfectly air-conditioned. Some of the classrooms have a bunch of computers available for anyone who doesn't have one strong enough for some projects.

What I Dislike About the Building

The crooked stairs - although extremely funny - are also vaguely annoying. It is also simply a mind-boggling design choice in general. The hilarity of it is always great to tell people who have never set foot in Shanks, though, so it really isn't all bad.

I know that this is a really small personal thing, but I wish the English part wasn't three stories up. I never have classes anywhere but the third floor, and it would be so convenient to have them on the ground floor instead. This also exacerbates my complaints about the funny stairs.

War Memorial Hall

My thoughts on War Memorial Hall

Figure 2. Outside of War Memorial Hall (via vt.edu)



History of the Building

War Memorial Hall originally finished construction in 1926. The building was funded by an alumni campaign to finance a building to memorialize Hokies who died fighting in World War I. The building has been significantly renovated multiple times, including from 1972 to 1975. Most recently, in Fall 2024, War Memorial finally reopened after two years of renovations.

What I Like About the Building

The recent reopening of War Memorial Hall has inspired me to actually start going to the gym this semester. It is so much closer to my dorm than McComas, and by having two gyms on campus, neither of them are as busy as McComas was before (from what I'd heard).

The gym itself is also really good. There is a fantastic selection of different machines, and a solid number of each. From my experience, most of the machines are simple and easy to use, and

there are also staff there that you could ask for help with anything if you need it.

What I Dislike About the Building

The gym took me a few minutes to find the first time I went there, but that isn't an issue long-term. I do wish the gym was closer to the entrance, but that is also a rather small complaint.

I wish there were more treadmills. Everything else there always has a few open machines (at least when I go), but sometimes there isn't an open treadmill. There are already a lot of them, but considering their popularity I still wish there were more.

Squires Student Center

My thoughts on the Squires Student Center

Figure 3. Outside of Squires Student Center (via campuslife.vt.edu)



History of the Building

Squires Hall (as it was originally called) was finished in 1937, and named in 1949 after John Houston Squires who donated \$10,000 dollars towards the building's construction. The building

was renovated between 1966 and 1970, after which it was renamed to Squires Student Center. It was renovated once again in 1991. There was an Au Bon Pain located in the Squires Food Court up until the end of the 2024 Spring semester, having been in the building for roughly 20 years.

What I Like About the Building

Squires is super close to home for me, so I visit it frequently out of convenience. One of the biggest conveniences I enjoy from the building is the dining. Burger 37 is really solid, and I get it occasionally, but Corner '24 is super nice and convenient. The soup can be a lifesaver when you're sick, and the mac and cheese is super good if you get it when it's fresh. The sandwiches are also good - personally I like the Corner '24 sandwiches better than ABP, since I prefer cold sandwiches over hot ones.

Squires is also home to the Breakzone. The Breakzone has pool, darts, bowling, and more, available to all students! It costs money to run a game there, but it is pretty cheap, and you can use Hokie P funds for it (not dining dollars). Bowling there especially is really fun!

The Pride Center is also in Squires, as I learned only recently. This is a fantastic resource for many of my friends, so although it isn't relevant to me specifically, I feel like it is worth a mention.

What I Dislike About the Building

Part of me really wishes that the soups (specifically the mac and cheese) at Corner '24 would be more consistently fresh, but that would require wasting food and that isn't good.

I greatly dislike that the university's 50-year plan has Squires getting torn down eventually. I don't see why they would get rid of it, and I just think it is a great shame.

Owens Hall

My thoughts on Owens Hall

Figure 4. Outside of Owens Hall (via vt.edu)



History of the Building

Owens Hall was built in 1939, and named after John Joseph Owens in 1952. One of the dining halls was changed into a banquet hall in 1987, and in 1991 the main dining area was renovated into Owens Food Court, more or less as we know it as today.

What I Like About the Building

The food at Owens is great. The cafeteria has a broad selection of restaurants, with Wan, Dish, and Ciotola being my personal favorites. Grubhubbing food from the cafeteria is generally a good call, it tends to come out quickly. Hokie Grill has a Chick Fil A and a Pizza Hut in it, and I am a frequent flier at Chick Fil A. I love the sweet tea there, and the large ones aren't terribly expensive for their size either.

Another big advantage of Owens, for me, is that it takes me about two minutes to get to Hokie

Grill from my dorm, and just one or two more to get to the cafeteria.

What I Dislike About the Building

I wish Wan would bring back the spicy sauce. It always made the bowls there so much tastier, and I don't know why they got rid of it. Plus, my roommate is vegetarian, and that sauce was the only thing that really made Wan edible for them.

Over the course of this semester, due to workers being funneled to Perry Place, Owens has been rather understaffed. This means that, for about half the semester, a bunch of the stores in the cafeteria were closed more often than not. It seems like they're getting more workers now, which is good, I just hope this issue doesn't come up again.

Creativity and Innovation District

My thoughts on the Creativity and Innovation District

Figure 5. Outside of the CID (via housing.vt.edu)



History of the Building

The Creativity and Innovation District (CID) is a very new building, opening in Fall 2021. It was constructed with modern features in mind, meant to best facilitate innovation and social interaction.

What I Like About the Building

CID is home. I have lived here for all my time at VT thus far, and am already lined up to live here for my final year as well. The rooms are a nice size, and the building has air conditioning which is great. Also the bathrooms are individual, which is great for me.

The Living-Learning Communities (LLCs) are the lifeblood of the building. Personally, I am a proud member of Studio 72, the community for arts and creativity. We have an amazing community lounge where we can go at any time to hang out with our fellow members, as well as lounges in the halls. Studio 72 also has a semesterly art showcase, held in the CID lobby.

CID itself also has events for all of its residents. My favorite is Monday Meals, where a bunch of CID residents go to Owens Hall to eat food together, alongside the faculty principal and his family. There is also Friday Friends, which can be pretty much anything, hosted by either the faculty principal or one of the three LLCs every Friday. One example of Friday Friends hosted by Studio 72 this semester was when we got the opportunity to learn about graffiti, and then spray paint a few walls designated for that purpose. It is fun to learn about new things, and Friday Friends is good for that.

What I Dislike About the Building

Recently, an issue has become more and more apparent that the building was not made with the most reliable materials. One of the elevators on my hall hasn't worked for most of the semester, and it isn't the first time I've seen an elevator malfunction in the building. One of the front doors has broken three separate times this semester as well. It just feels like the building is falling apart, but hopefully as things get fixed they are being made superior - but I don't know.

The only issue I have with the building conceptually would be that the student athletes live in CID. I know that sounds bad, but they do not participate in pretty much any of the building events, and I never interact with them in the halls or see other members of Studio 72 interact with them ever. It feels like this building was not designed for them, and that they should have a dorm more suited for their needs. There isn't a gym in CID, and you would think that would be useful for the student athletes to have.