

Site of the Moseley Building



This retail block was built in 1874, as the second commercial building in the new Needham Center. Typical of retail blocks in its day, the Moseley Building had retail stores at street level, anchored by the large general store at the corner. The second floor had a large open meeting and assembly hall, and a number of smaller rooms on the second and third floors served for offices and storage. This picture, taken c. 1885, shows the T.J. Crossman General Store at the corner, selling “Groceries, Flour, and Grain.” The cart rounding the corner is carrying sacks of coffee.

In 1884, after the split with Wellesley, the Town rented the rooms and offices above Crossman’s store to use as a temporary Town Hall. For nearly 20 years it housed the town offices, records and the police lock-up. After Town Hall was built in 1902, the meeting hall was used by a number of groups, including the Episcopal Society, the Needham Young People’s Association, and the Library, before becoming the first location of the Needham Cinema. The Moseley Building was torn down in 1928, replaced by the current retail building.