

Townsend Green



The old center of Needham (c. 1870), showing the park now known as Townsend Green.

This small park, at the intersection of Central Avenue and Nehoiden Street, is named after Rev. Jonathan Townsend, the town's first minister. When Needham was founded in 1711, this piece of land lay at its center, right in front of the Meeting House. It was therefore a convenient meeting place for townsfolk to gather after church services, or for other community gatherings.

In the 19th century, the Green was known as the "Heater Piece." Although the origins of this name are not clear, one theory is that it was so-called because it is triangular and resembled a flat-iron. Another is that the name refers to the custom of walking horses around it, to warm them up for the horse races that were run down Central Avenue. There is now a decorative planter on the Central Avenue side, which began its life as a horse watering trough.

This small piece of land formerly belonged to the adjacent Parsonage property. It was deeded to the Needham History Center in 1944 and was named Townsend Green in the Minister's honor.



Needham
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