

SPRING HILL COLLEGE / MOSELEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL, Wake Green Road



Spring Hill College, Wake Green Road

Spring Hill College was so called because it had originally been founded in the road of that name near Hockley. It was set up as the result of a bequest in the Will of Charles Glover, who died in 1821, to provide and equip a college for the training of Congregational Ministers. By the 1830s the building was found to be inadequate for its purpose and a new site alongside Wake Green Road was purchased for a much larger building. Work on its construction began in 1854 and the college moved there in the June of 1857. The architect was Joseph James, and the building is a fine example of the Decorated style of Gothic Revival. Just under thirty years later the college moved again, this time to Oxford, where it still flourishes under the name of Mansfield College; the new name was taken in honour of Mr G.S. Mansfield (Charles Glover's father-in-law), who had contributed generously to its funds.

It is not entirely clear to what use the building was put between the years 1886 and 1892, but in the latter year it was bought by a Mr. Ross, who renamed it the Pine Dell Hydropathic Establishment. Springs rising under the buildings provide natural spa water, which filled the bath which still exists in the foundations of the present West Wing Hall. The boarding fees were five shillings per day, or seven shillings if the full hydropathic treatment was taken. At the same time the 'Moseley Botanical Gardens' were opened in the corner of the grounds adjacent to Wake Green and College Roads. These ventures lasted for less than a decade, though the Ross family continued to live there for some time afterwards.

In 1923 the building was acquired by Birmingham Education Committee and the Secondary School opened on 11th September of that year. Little had been done in advance to provide equipment of any kind, but great progress had been made by the end of the first term, and the school (which was renamed Moseley Grammar School in 1939) soon acquired a very good reputation. The building suffered bomb damage in November 1940, and the school moved to Kidderminster for two years. In 1972 the building was listed as being of special architectural and historic interest.

Uproar broke out in September 1987 when the Birmingham City Schools Sub-Committee voted to seek to demolish the west wing of the building on the grounds that dilapidation had gone so far that repairs would be prohibitively expensive. This decision was reversed, a

month later, by the full City Council, although it was estimated that the cost of the necessary repairs would be of the order of £5 million. However, with grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Regional Development Fund the west wing was refurbished and opened in 1998 and renamed back to its original Spring Hill College, but functioning as the Sixth Form of Moseley School.