

# Preservation is Revolutionary

ANNUAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

June 11, 2026 | 521 Overlook at Fenway Park



## 2026 People's Preservation Choice Award Nominee

### **The Tomb House at Edgell Grove Cemetery**

The Tomb House at Edgell Grove Cemetery – Nomination Sales Pitch The restoration of The Tomb House at Edgell Grove Cemetery honors the efforts of preservationists in the 1990s who recognized its architectural, historical, and local significance.

The Edgell Grove Cemetery was designated a National Register District in 1990 . It was built in 1846 when Colonel Moses Edgell of Framingham donated the land. He was a landowner, member of the militia and president of one of Framingham's first banks. The cemetery was a product of the Rural Cemetery Movement in America. Similar to other cemeteries of the movement, Edgell Grove Cemetery consists of a park-like setting that draws inspiration from English gardens to emphasize the majesty of the surrounding land.

The Tomb House (historically named "The Receiving Tomb") was built in 1885. It is believed to be the earliest use of cast stone in America and is built in the Gothic Revival style. The Tomb House was originally used to store caskets during the winter located at the lower level (when tools at the time could not excavate graves by hand) as well as provide a place for burial rites.

With the arrival of modern excavation equipment, The Tomb House fell into disuse and was not maintained. It was set to be demolished but Former State Representative Chris Walsh successfully

advocated to save The Tomb House. This effort first brought to attention the importance of the structure to the community of Framingham.

Although the original use of The Edgell Grove Tomb House is obsolete, its importance and significance as an architectural, local and religious site is not obsolete. A grant from the Community Preservation Act ensured that the restoration could be thoroughly completed with historically accurate repairs, ADA updates and The Tomb House could take on a new purpose through adaptive reuse.

The exterior restoration focused on repairs to the foundation, masonry restoration, wood window and door restoration and a slate roof replacement with wood and copper gutters and downspouts.

Environmentally, the exterior repairs including the new roof (through stormwater management improvements) have reduced erosion and runoff that can cause harm to the surrounding soil and vegetation.

The new use of the building will be an office, welcome center and exhibit space for cemetery staff, residents of Framingham, visitors, researchers, genealogists, bird watchers, garden enthusiasts, school children, veterans and the broader community. Cemetery operations will have a centralized location which will better support those who need its services and educate the community on the history of the cemetery and surrounding area. This includes not only the Edgell Grove Cemetery but also the Edwards, Church and Old South cemeteries.

By preserving The Tomb House, it maintains the overall atmosphere of the cemetery that was originally intended to differ from the church like cemeteries of the time. This tranquility is important for the visitors of the site. The historically accurate and environmentally conscious repairs ensure that the surrounding landscape is preserved and The Tomb House can continue to be an important part of Framingham's heritage