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**SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2017 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD  
TO THE AMES CHAPEL IN HINGHAM**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Ames Chapel in Hingham, to receive a 2017 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” said Secretary Galvin. “The projects the Commission is recognizing this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. This project preserves and revitalizes the Ames Chapel, a treasured Hingham landmark.”

The Ames Chapel is a focal point of the Hingham Cemetery, a picturesque garden cemetery and arboretum modeled after Mount Auburn. Construction of the chapel began in 1886, funded primarily by the Ames family and other wealthy summer residents. The chapel was built to provide a funeral location for families who had moved away and were returning to bury loved ones at the Hingham Cemetery.

Designed by J. Sumner Fowler, a young local architect, in the Queen Anne style with Stick-style detailing, the chapel features asymmetrical massing, a steeply pitched roof, half-timbered gables, and patterned shingles with vertical and horizontal stickwork at the building corners and surrounding the windows and doors. By the 1920s, the building had largely ceased to be used for its original purpose. Serving next as office space for the cemetery board and then later for storage, the underutilized chapel fell into poor condition.

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In 1989 the cemetery directors embarked on a long-term program of restoration and revitalization at the cemetery, which included the rehabilitation of the Ames Chapel for town-wide use as an event space. The efforts of the cemetery board garnered support throughout and beyond the community, including private donations and grants from the Hingham Community Preservation Fund, the Hingham Historical Commission, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund.

Rehabilitation of the chapel began with a conditions assessment and feasibility study, which revealed that critical stabilization work was needed. Structural and foundation problems were resolved, masonry was repointed, windows were fully restored, and the exterior stairs and railings were made accessible. The second phase of the rehabilitation focused on exterior repainting and on a comprehensive interior renovation. The main space on the first floor was transformed into an event location, with entry vestibule and parlor. The historic woodwork and flooring in all the first-floor rooms was carefully refinished or replicated where necessary.

Today, the first-floor rooms feature period furnishings, wallpaper, and lighting, and restored pews line the walls of the main event space. The necessary steel reinforcement of the original wood trusses was carefully executed in order to blend in with the historic wood framing. The lower level of the building is accessed by an enlarged original staircase or adjacent accessible wheelchair lift. The lower level contains a meeting room, a small office, accessible restrooms, and a kitchenette. For the final touch, the exterior was repainted in a historically appropriate color scheme of green, ochre, and red jewel tones.

The rehabilitation of the Ames Chapel represents the culmination of a dedicated community initiative. The long-term planning and successful execution of this rehabilitation project demonstrate what is possible when a community comes together around a shared vision for a historic preservation effort.

This is the 39th year of MHC's Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, Stewardship, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of Individual Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Secretary Galvin will present the awards at an afternoon ceremony on November 2, 2017, at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Ames Chapel in Hingham is one of 11 projects to be honored.