



ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

Oak Grove, established in 1855, is Fall River's most significant cemetery, not only because of the prominence of those buried here but also because of the scenic value of the 19th century landscape and the impressive quality of the Victorian funerary monuments which line the winding pathways of this peaceful resting place.

Originally 47 acres and now over 99 acres, Oak Grove follows the model of the picturesque rural cemetery-park first developed at Mt. Auburn in Cambridge in the 1830's. Fall River's version was designed and laid out by local architect Josiah Brown, who is also known for his designs of early mills including the Union, Border City, and the now demolished Montaup Mills and Fall River Manufactory. The original plan calls for a series of meandering roadways designed to compliment the natural topography. Some roads follow the contours of the valleys and ridges which others cross natural and man-made hills to provide scenic vistas. Many of the roads are concentric elliptical paths with axial roads giving access to the interior of the grounds. To further  
(cont'd)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

Oak Grove, Fall River's largest city-owned cemetery, was developed in the mid-19th century as a rural garden cemetery, and its natural beauties and imposing monuments reflect the wealth and pride of the mill owners and city elite buried here.

The original 47 acres of land was purchased by the city from Dr. Nathan Durfee at the high price of \$200 an acre. The elevated site was chosen over less expensive parcels because of its central location and natural appropriateness for cemetery use, and perhaps because of the importance of the owner. In return for the purchase of his land, Durfee agreed to buy a parcel between North Main and Highland which the city had originally acquired for use as a park. The new cemetery was located in the relatively undeveloped northeastern section of the city near several of the granite quarries which furnished stone for the mills.

Oak Grove was conceived as a rural cemetery after the model of Mt. Auburn in Cambridge, established in 1831. Mt. Auburn was the first to combine the idea of a park for the living and a resting space for the dead. Rather than selecting the traditional flat semi-urban site, the founders of Mt. Auburn moved outside the city to an area with rugged terrain and natural scenic beauty appealing to the 19th century romantic tradition. In the case of Mt. Auburn, the cemetery was developed under the sponsorship of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society and for a time played a second role as an experimental garden for fruits and vegetables. The design called for paths and roadways to wind around the hills and ponds in routes dictated by terrain, in this way achieving both efficient use of space and picturesque vistas. Although privately  
(cont'd)

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Fall River and Its Industries (1877) p. 157-8.

Phillips History of Fall River (1944-6) Fascicle II, p. 99.

History of Bristol County, (1883) p. 344.

City Documents (1855)

Margery Eagan, "Rich, Famous, Infamous Rest at Oak Grove", New Bedford Standard Times, 11/11/79

Cambridge Historical Commission Reports

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Fall River, Mass.

Form No:

N/A

Property Name: Oak Grove Cemetery

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Cont'd)

emphasize the rural spirit, avenues are named for trees and paths for shrubs. Landscaping is naturalistic, described in one early history as a "tastefully ordered profusion of trees, shrubbery and flowers."

The main entrance off Stetson Street is marked by a handsome Gothic Revival Tudor-arched gate some 25' high, erected in 1873 in a combination of rough and smooth-faced granite blocks. The gate arch is inscribed with Gothic-style lettering as follows: "The shadows have fallen and they wait for the day." The date "1873" is carved in a trefoil at the peak of the arch. The heavy iron gates are highly decorative, as is the fanciful wrought iron cross and cresting at the pinnacle. Flanking the entrance on both sides are small Gothic Revival granite gatehouses with red tile roofs. The architect of the gateway is not known.

Stone walls and fences originally enclosed the entire cemetery. Many of the plots are set off by granite retaining walls. The original receiving tomb, which dates from 1857, is Greek Revival in style and is constructed of large, smooth granite slabs.

Approximately 46,500 burials have taken place at Oak Grove during its century and a quarter of operation, and plots are still being sold. The earliest gravestones date from 1822 and were moved to this location from other cemeteries including North Burial Ground. The majority are late 19th century markers which reflect the opulent taste of the many well-to-do families buried here. Generally much larger and more lavish than the simple early to mid-19th century markers, these temples, obelisks, ledges, stones and sarcophagi are generally of granite or marble, although other types of stone were also used.

Despite the fact that Victorians believed elaborate tombs indicated vanity, many patrons had showy monuments. Some of the most imposing were erected for members of the Borden family who figure so significantly in the city's history. The grave of mill baron Richard Borden is marked by a granite pedestal surmounted by a female statue representing Hope—the whole standing some 25' tall. His distinguished brother Jefferson Borden is memorialized by a nearby obelisk, one of the tallest in the cemetery. The B. H. Borden memorial is also a statue on a high pedestal.

Foster H. Stafford, one of the city's leading textile manufacturers and a founder of the Stafford Mills, had a miniature mill built to mark his resting place. Standing three stories high with windows and a gable roof, the mill is about 5' high. The grave of James Buffinton, one of the city's mayors, is marked by a fanciful open cupola with the name inscribed on a book inside. In contrast, the Slade monument in the Egyptian Revival style is severe and monumental in feeling.

The largest and most impressive memorials are the Classical-style mausoleums. The 1930 grave of Earl Perry Charlton, one of the founders of the F.W. Woolworth Company, is marked by a miniature Greek Revival temple with four fluted Doric columns. The Sears family mausoleum is also in the shape of a miniature temple, with Ionic columns set in antis.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 1/5/83

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 7 of 10

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Fall River Multiple Resource Area  
State MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

61. Notre Dame School

Substantive Review

Keeper

2/16/83 [Signature]

Attest

62. Oak Grove Cemetery

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

2/16/83 [Signature]

Attest

63. Osborn Street School

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

2/16/83 [Signature]

Attest

64. Picard, Israel, House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

2/16/83 [Signature]

Attest

65. Pilgrim Mills

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

2/16/83 [Signature]

Attest

66. Pine Street School

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

2/16/83 [Signature]

Attest

67. Pocasset Firehouse #7

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

2/16/83 [Signature]

Attest

68. Prince Henry The Navigator  
(statue)

Substantive Review

Keeper

~~2/16/83~~ [Signature] RS

Attest

69. Quequechan Club

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

2/16/83 [Signature]

Attest

70. Quequechan Valley Mills  
Historic District

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

2/16/83 [Signature]

Attest

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Oak Grove Cemetery (Fall River MRA)  
Bristol County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 115/83-15  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.7.84  
Date Due: 2/3/83 - 2/19/83  
Action:  ACCEPT 2/16/83  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom. / Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for:  technical corrections cited below  
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

## 8. Significance

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UMT References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Form Prepared By

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Fall River MRA, MA

SF III-0

Gen. View

Oak Grove Cemetery



Fall River MRA, Ma

SE III-9

Entrance Gate

Oak Grove Cemetery



Fall River MRA, Me

SE III-13  
Receiving Tomb  
Oak Grove Cemetery



Fall River MRA, Ma

SE III-15

General View

Oak Grove Cemetery



Fall River MRA, Mass

SE III-16  
Oak Grove Cemetery  
Sears Tomb

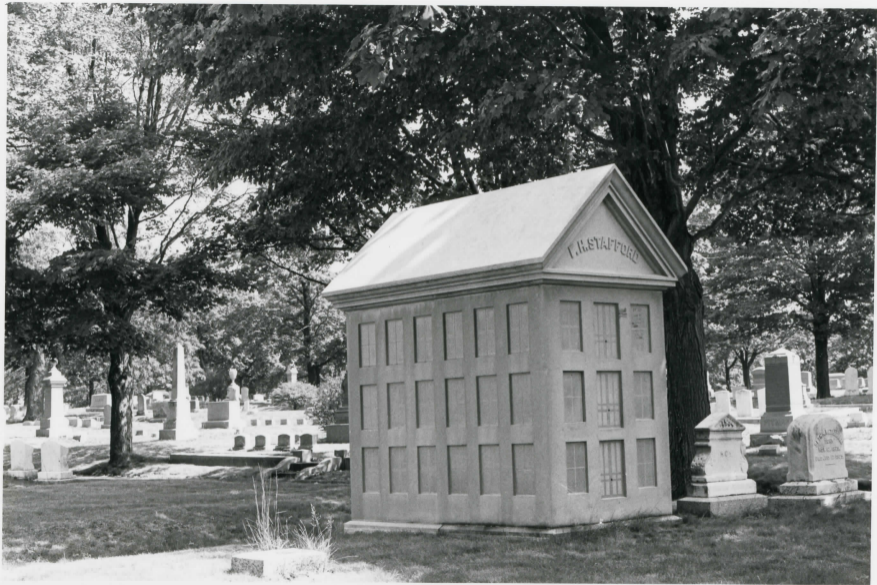


Fall river MRA, Ma

SE III-18

Charlton Tomb

Oak Grove Cemetery



Fall River MRA, Ms

SE III - 19

Stafford Tomb

Oak Grove Cemetery

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000279