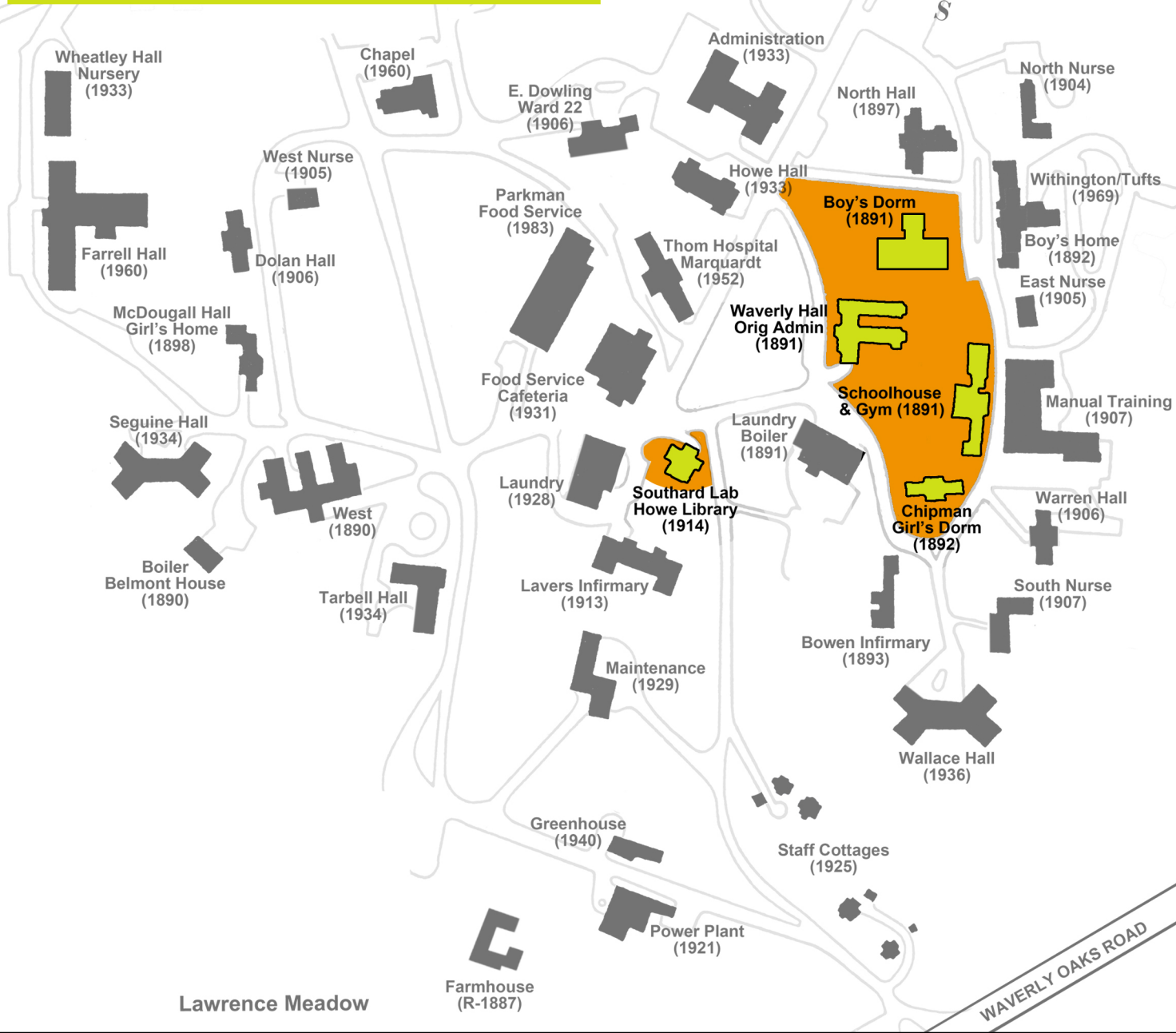
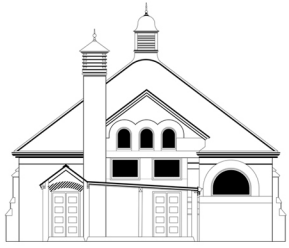


# THE FERNALD

## “CORE 4”

Schoolhouse & Gymnasium  
Activity Center / Original Boys Dorm  
Chipman Hall / Original Girls Dorm  
Waverly Hall (& Howe Library)



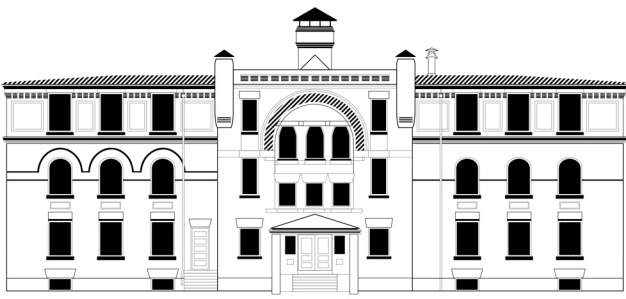


# SCHOOLHOUSE & GYMNASIUM

**Built in 1891**, the Schoolhouse & Gymnasium are the most historically significant buildings on the Fernald campus. For all practical purposes, this is where Special Education and Special Physical Education began **IN THE UNITED STATES!!** Walter Fernald's educational methods for the Developmentally Disabled are still in use today.

The schoolhouse itself could be repurposed as a Museum and Center for Special Education & Disability Advocacy, with the attached gymnasium as a sizable and accessible function space. **Both the school and gym are currently salvageable.**





# ACTIVITY CENTER (Original Boys Dorm)

The original Boy's Dormitory was **built in 1891**, and is the **ONLY** building of its kind in any State institution in the US. Envisioned by George Tarbell, a superintendent of the Massachusetts School for Feeble Minded Children, this building was an aspirational ideal - designed in collaboration with William Preston, the esteemed architect who built the Boston Public Library, among other famous buildings in the late 1800s.

Built to house the "feeble minded" boys whose job was to dig up the fieldstones that would lay the foundations of the new campus, Tarbell envisioned a dormitory that considered every aspect of their lives - including ambulation, ventilation, 'hierarchies of maturity' and space. When Walter E. Fernald took over as Superintendent, he quickly realized the impractical aspects of this building, and so **no others like it exist**.



1933

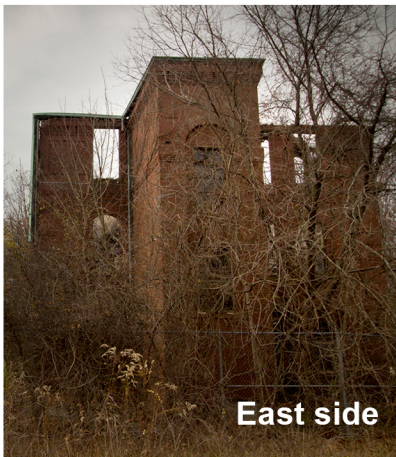
After being closed as a dormitory in 1963, this building was used as an Activity Center until it was condemned in 1981.

**The building is not salvageable**, but portions of its magnificent castle-like facade can be buttressed and saved as a memorial to (1) the children who laid the foundations of the campus, (2) to the aspirational ideals of its design, and (3) to its later history as a symbol of abuse during the Fernald's "dark times."

**This is the most unique and architecturally significant building on the Fernald campus.**



2023



East side



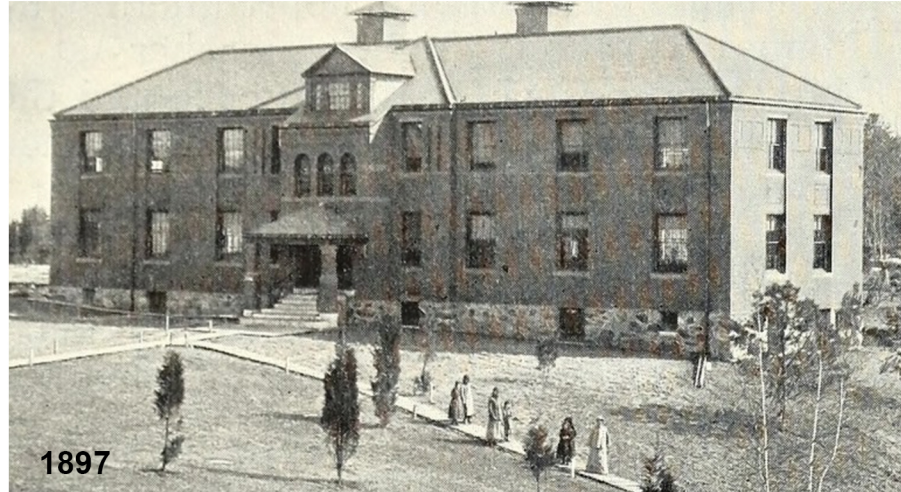
Front facade  
arched bays



# CHIPMAN HALL (Original Girls Dorm)

**Built in 1892**, Chipman Hall represents the beginning of Walter E. Fernald's vision for the campus. After he took over as Superintendent, Fernald quickly realized the impractical aspects of the Boy's Dorm and pressured the architect, William Preston, to reconsider the in-progress designs of the Girl's Dorm - later named Chipman Hall.

**Chipman Hall became the model for ALL other residences on the Fernald campus, and informed designs for institutional dorms across the country - including US military barracks!**



1897



1910

Courtesy of Walter E. Fernald State School, Ware, Mass.  
AT HOME IN THEIR OWN LIVING ROOM.

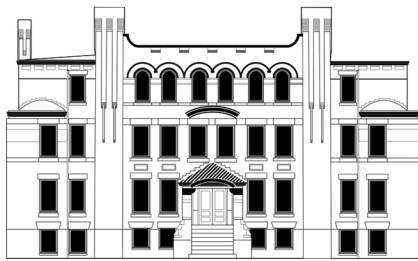


Center Pavilion & Portico

**The building is not salvageable**, but portions of its facade can be buttressed and saved as a memorial to its unique architectural significance, and notable design impact on institutional residential structures.



2023



# WAVERLY HALL

(Original Administration Building)



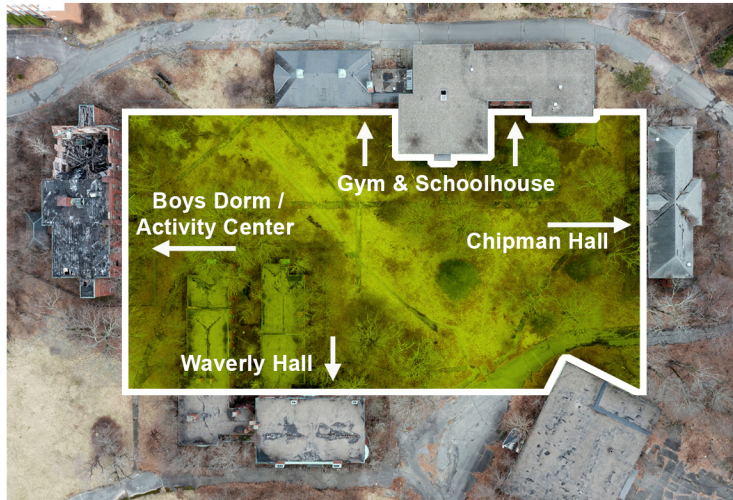
**Built in 1891**, Waverly Hall served as the original Administration Building, and included offices, dining halls, and staff residences. Also designed by William Preston, Waverly Hall is not architecturally or historically significant in the same way as the Boys & Girls Dorms and Schoolhouse & Gym. However, along with the other Core 3, Waverly Hall completes a quadrangle around a natural courtyard that could become a meaningful, nature-oriented Memorial Park.

Like the Boys & Girls Dormitories, Waverly Hall cannot be salvaged. However, portions of its impressive facade can be buttressed and saved as part of a "Core-4" Memorial Courtyard and Park - where the best aspirations (and worst outcomes) of the Fernald Center are represented.



# QUADRANGLE COURTYARD

The Core-4 Buildings form a quadrangle around a natural and quite beautiful courtyard.



This courtyard could be a quiet, thoughtful, Memorial Park that celebrates the historic and visionary accomplishments of the Fernald Center, while reminding visitors to reflect on its complicated history - in the presence of nature, and relics of the Fernald's most significant buildings.



The Schoolhouse & Gymnasium could be a center for Disability Advocacy and Special Education. Along with structural relics of the Boys Dorm, Girls Dorm, and Waverly Hall, all surround a peaceful park of reflection and 140 year old trees, accessible sidewalks already in place, close to the new Activity Park. This could be an important intersection of past, present, and future Waltham.



The Providence National Bank Facade at 50 Weybosset Street in Providence RI, a hugely popular tourist site (looming over an equally popular parking lot), demonstrates how a classic building facade can be buttressed for safety, while preserving portions of a building on the National Historic Registry.



## THE CORE-5

Also worthy of preservation consideration is the **HOWE LIBRARY / Southard Research Lab**. **Built in 1914**, the Library can still be salvaged - and it is quite close to the Core-4 Courtyard.



The building is named in honor of Samuel Gridley Howe, founder of the Perkins School for the Blind, and director of the Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth - the precursor to the Fernald Center.

As is always the case with the Fernald, there is a mixed history to consider. The Library building was originally a recreational center until the Southard Lab was opened in its basement - where the infamous oatmeal experiments were conducted in the 1940s.

At some point in the 1920s, Walter Fernald started moving his book collection & research into the building and it became a library. By the 1990s the Howe Library housed the largest collection of research and information on developmental disabilities **IN THE WORLD**.



# PRESERVE THE FERNALD CORE-4

The Fernald Center is the most historically important institution of its kind **IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE!!!**

The **Schoolhouse & Gymnasium** started and innovated Special Education in the United States - **HERE IN WALTHAM!!!**

The **Boys Dorm (later Activity Center)** stands unique as an aspirational architectural marvel of enlightened (but ultimately impractical) ideals. There is no other building like it anywhere else in State institutional architecture.

**Chipman Hall** (the original Girls Dorm) built on the ideals of the Boys Dorm, and was so successful in its design, that it informed all future residences at the Fernald Center ... and then every other State Institution across the US .... including Military Dormitories!!!

**Waverly Hall** borders a beautiful natural courtyard, and was the original administration building of this historically significant institution.

The **Howe Library** represents the absolute worst and most notorious of The Fernald's history - but also housed over a century of crucial research collected by Walter Fernald and his successors.



Walter Fernald with his family, living on campus in the early 1900s.  
Boys Dorm directly behind, Waverly Hall to the right, North Hall to the left.

## PRACTICAL STEPS

The **Boys Dorm** (Activity Center), **Girls Dorm**, and **Waverly Hall** cannot be salvaged, but sections of their facades can be buttressed and preserved as important historical architectural “monuments” that are utterly unique to Waltham.

While preservation funding outside of city resources is explored, Waltham can enact sensible measures at present - repair and secure the fences surrounding the Boys & Girls Dorms, and Waverly Hall to prevent further vandalism.

Similarly, while preservation / restoration funding is explored outside of city resources, the **Schoolhouse & Gymnasium** should be PROPERLY BOARDED UP. The open roof hatch should be closed to prevent further water damage to the central staircase & landings.

**Howe Library** should be PROPERLY BOARDED UP, and roof holes patched to prevent further weather damage.

In the meantime, preservation funding can be researched.

