



STAFF REPORT
SUBMITTED BY: Chris Frotten
DATE: April 5, 2024
SUBJECT: Former VIC Building/Barrington Ballfield Washroom and Storage Facility Design Options
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: 3.4.3 and 5.3.1

ORIGIN

During the March 9 budget meeting, the idea of renovating the former VIC building to accommodate ballfield amenities instead of constructing a new building was brought forward. This report outlines possible design options and various factors to consider.

BACKGROUND

Last year, a staff report (attached) was presented to Council outlining that the current approach of relying on portable toilets at the Ralph Creamer Atwood Memorial Ball Field was unsustainable and the canteen and storage amenities were incompatible with our commitment to providing quality recreational facilities for our residents. It was suggested that the time had come to consider addressing these longstanding issues and invest in a permanent solution.

This initiated the consideration of construction a multipurpose building at the Ballfield that would house washrooms, storage space and a canteen. Staff presented a concept you, and you requested more information on cost and to consider it during budget deliberations. The estimated cost of the concept was \$234,000 and it was felt this was too high, you asked us to gather more options for further consideration. A downsized washroom/storage combo and washroom-only concept were presented to you at the budget meeting.

Based on the cost guide and recent tenders in the province for similar projects, the estimated cost of these downsized concepts was \$84,000-\$98,000 for the washroom/storage combo and \$60,000-\$70,000 for the washroom-only building. The closest similar project that could we found was built in Cumberland in 2017 for \$105,000 (<https://www.amherst.ca/washroom-changeroom-facility-officially-opened-atlions-park.html>). The capital budget currently has \$80,000 to cover the cost of its construction.

DISCUSSION

It is important to acknowledge the ongoing discussions surrounding the future utilization of the former VIC building as we delve into the exploration of design options for its renovation to accommodate ballfield amenities. These discussions reflect the dynamic nature of community needs and aspirations, shaping the broader context within which design considerations are being made. It should be noted that while these design options are being presented concurrently with these discussions, they are not definitive or final in any way. Instead, they serve as conceptual proposals aimed at initiating dialogue and garnering feedback. Moreover, these design options will be subject to further refinement and adaptation to align with any decisions regarding the future use of the building. Thus, it's important to approach the review of these options with an understanding of their exploratory nature and their responsiveness to evolving community priorities and decisions regarding the building's future utilization.

Each design option has unique elements and approaches aimed at fulfilling the envisioned functionality and aesthetic appeal of the renovated space. Here is an overview of the general features encompassed within each design option. By understanding the primary characteristics of each option, I hope you will gain insights into the diverse possibilities and considerations underlying the decision-making process, thereby facilitating a more informed evaluation of the available choices.

Option 1a

This option would see an accessible ramp and deck built on the back side of the building which would provide access to the rear entrance of the building and to a serving window. A canteen, canteen storage, field storage and washroom would be built on the back side of the open space on the first floor. A door would be built providing access control to the back of the building. Otherwise, the rest of the building would remain as is. In this option, the reception desk could be demolished to provide a larger space in the front of the building. The total renovated square footage in this option would be approximately 371, plus the deck.

Option 1b

This option is very similar to option 1a, but the canteen and canteen storage are combined to avoid removing a set of windows. This would thus move the washroom further own into the larger open space in the front of the building. Like in option 1a, the reception desk could be demolished to provide a larger space. The total renovated square footage in this option would be approximately 417, plus the deck.

Option 2

In this option, an accessible ramp and deck would be built on the eastern side of the building which would provide access to the rear entrance of the building and to a service window. The canteen would be built by repurposing a smaller storage room, the kitchenette and a smaller office on the eastern side of the building. A large multipurpose storage room, that could also be divided in smaller rooms and a field storage room accessed from the outside would be building on the back side of the open space on the first

floor. In this option, there would be no door built providing access control to the back of the building. Otherwise, the rest of the building would remain as is.

As with the other options, the reception desk could be demolished to provide a larger space in the front of the building. The total renovated square footage in this option would be approximately 805, plus the deck.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

A general cost per square foot of \$200 has been proposed to estimate the expenses associated with each option. This figure draws from the costs incurred in comparable projects; however, it's important to recognize that actual costs can fluctuate significantly. Factors such as materials, labor, site conditions, and specific project requirements can influence the final expense. Therefore, while \$200 per square foot provides a starting point for estimation, it's advisable to engage a professional cost estimator for a more precise budget if a firmer financial projection is necessary. By involving a cost estimator, we can obtain a comprehensive assessment that considers all relevant variables, resulting in a more accurate and reliable budget for informed decision-making.

That said, at \$200 per square foot option 1a would have an estimated cost of \$74,200, option 1b would have an estimated cost of \$83,400 and option 2 would have an estimated cost of \$161,000.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

PUBLIC CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATIONS

These amenities have been the subject of extensive discussion and feedback from ballfield users over a significant period. Gathering input from those who utilize the ballfield has been integral to ensuring that any proposed renovations meet the actual needs and preferences of the users. Through these discussions, various ideas and suggestions have been brought forth, guiding the planning process and shaping the proposed amenities.

RECOMMENDATION

Exploring the renovation of the former VIC building presents a pragmatic approach that merits serious consideration over constructing a new facility. Renovation not only maximizes the utilization of existing infrastructure but also minimizes the impact on available space within the parking lot area. By repurposing the former VIC building, we can leverage its existing footprint and structural framework, thereby avoiding the need for additional land allocation and preserving valuable parking space. Moreover, renovating an existing structure often proves to be a more cost-effective solution compared to construction a new building from scratch. It entails fewer expenses associated with site preparation, foundation work, and utility connections, resulting in potential cost savings that could be allocated towards enhancing the quality and functionality of the renovated space.

I do not have a specific recommendation regarding the design options as each offers a variation in how the amenities are arranged and presented, yet all aim to fulfill the needs and expectations of the users effectively. That said, considering the ongoing discussion regarding the future use of the building, it is imperative that any decision regarding the design for renovating the former VIC building to accommodate ballfield amenities takes this into careful consideration.

SUGGESTED MOTION

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

- September 19, 2023, Staff Report re: Multi-Purpose Building at Ralph Creamer Atwood Memorial Ball Field
- Design Options

STAFF REPORT

SUBMITTED BY: Chris Frotten

DATE: September 14, 2023

SUBJECT: Multi-Purpose Building at Ralph Creamer Atwood Memorial Ball Field

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: 3.4.3 and 5.3.1

ORIGIN

This report outlines the critical need to improve the user and visitor experience, ensure hygiene standards, and enhance the overall functionality of the Ralph Creamer Atwood Memorial Ball Field, while also addressing the financial strain caused by the current practice of renting, purchasing, and maintaining portable toilets at the field.

BACKGROUND

The Ralph Creamer Atwood Memorial Ball Field holds a special place in our community and is a symbol of community unity and recreational vitality within our municipality. It has played host to countless sporting events, community gatherings, and cherished memories for residents spanning generations. However, despite its significant role in fostering community engagement, the aging canteen building, and the absence of adequate restroom facilities and storage solutions has hindered its potential and placed a strain on both the community's well-being and our municipal resources.

For far too long, the lack of proper sanitation and storage options has marred the otherwise joyful experiences that take place at the ball field. Events that should have been occasions of celebration often include the discomfort and inconvenience of having inadequate restroom facilities. This reality has affected not only players and spectators but also the dedicated volunteer organizers who pour their efforts into making these events a success.

In an attempt to address this issue, we resorted to renting and/or purchasing portable toilets to meet the immediate needs of attendees. While this approach has provided a temporary fix, it has introduced a new set of challenges. The financial burden of continually procuring and maintaining portable toilets has strained our resources, diverting funds that could be better utilized to enhance our community infrastructure and services.

Furthermore, the maintenance of these portable toilets has proven to be a daunting task, with the facilities often falling short of the standards of cleanliness that we aspire to maintain in our public spaces. This has led to frustration among visitors and participants, who deserve a higher level of comfort and hygiene during their time at the ball field.

Finally, the aging canteen building now struggles to meet modern standards and expectations. This building, an integral part of the ball field's user and visitor experience, is in need of replacement or extensive renovation to restore its role as a welcoming space for refreshments and social interaction.

DISCUSSION

It is evident that the current approach of relying on portable toilets is unsustainable and incompatible with our commitment to providing quality recreational facilities for our residents. The time has come to consider addressing this longstanding issue and invest in a permanent solution that not only elevates the visitor experience but also upholds the dignity and well-being of everyone who utilizes ball field.

A proposed multi-purpose building would feature:

- Public washrooms for all genders and families, adhering to accessibility standards.
- Adequate storage space for sports equipment, maintenance tools, and event supplies.
- A modern canteen area equipped for food preparation, sales, and service.

A comprehensive multi-purpose building would offer an array of benefits that extend far beyond addressing immediate challenges. This project holds the potential to reshape the very essence of the ball field, elevating it from a functional space to a dynamic community hub that embodies inclusivity, efficiency, and enduring value.

Versatility and Efficiency

Having a public washroom, storage facility, and canteen under one roof would represent a paradigm shift in how we approach community spaces. This integrated approach maximizes the utility of the structure, minimizing the physical footprint while maximizing convenience for visitors, event organizers, and players.

Financial Responsibility

By investing in a permanent facility that serves multiple purposes, we ensure that every dollar invested yields perpetual benefits and we eliminate the need for recurring costs associated with renting and maintaining portable toilets.

Elevated Visitor Experience

The multi-purpose building will transform the visitor experience at the ball field. Access to clean, modern, and accessible restroom facilities will enhance comfort and satisfaction, and the canteen will serve as a hub for refreshments and social interaction. A positive experience not only fosters community engagement but also encourages repeat visits and the growth of community events.

Revitalization of Community Space

The aging canteen building can be replaced with a modern structure that better serves the needs of the community. This contributes to the revitalization of the ball field, ensuring its continued relevance and appeal.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

The multi-purpose building would be designed to cater to the needs of all members of our community. Restroom facilities would adhere to accessibility standards, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their physical abilities, can fully participate and enjoy the ball field experience.

Community Pride and Identity

The realization of this project would serve as a testament to our municipality's dedication to community well-being and infrastructure renewal. It signifies a commitment to fostering a sense of pride in our community spaces and creating a legacy that resonates with residents for years to come.

Addressing Community Concerns

One of the most compelling advantages of this project lies in its potential to address a persistent issue that has weighed heavily on our community – the condition and amenities at our local ball fields. Over time, we've consistently received feedback, and it's clear that the state of our facilities, particularly washroom amenities, has been a frequent source of frustration for visitors and participants alike.

Resolving this concern is not only a matter of convenience but also a significant allocation of staff resources. Addressing complaints and attempting to mitigate issues, often beyond our immediate control, has demanded a substantial investment of time and effort. By implementing this project, we take a proactive step towards resolving a longstanding challenge, allowing our staff to redirect their focus towards more constructive and forward-thinking initiatives that benefit the community at large.

Strengthening Community Partnerships

The proposed project offers an exceptional opportunity to strengthen our relationships with local leagues and user groups. The fact that league representatives and user groups are not only supportive but also willing to potentially partner in fundraising for field improvements speaks volumes about the collaborative potential of this endeavor. This shared investment signifies a collective commitment to enhancing our recreational spaces, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among stakeholders.

This partnership not only amplifies the financial resources available for the project but also signifies a broader community endorsement. It's a testament to the shared understanding that our ball fields are more than just physical spaces; they're central to the social fabric of our community. Through this joint effort, we're not merely upgrading facilities; we're investing in the well-being and enjoyment of all those who utilize these spaces, strengthening the bonds that hold our community together.

By leveraging the support of these passionate and dedicated groups, we tap into a wellspring of local knowledge and expertise. This collaborative effort will undoubtedly lead to a more nuanced and tailored project, one that resonates with the specific needs and preferences of the very individuals who utilize and cherish these ball fields.

In summary, the proposed multi-purpose building represents a transformative opportunity that aligns with our municipality's values, goals, and objectives. By addressing multiple needs under one roof, we unlock synergies that amplify the benefits, both tangible and intangible, to our community. By proactively addressing a longstanding concern, we free up valuable staff resources and demonstrate our commitment to providing top-tier recreational spaces. Moreover, the collaborative nature of this venture reinforces the idea that our ball fields are a collective responsibility, one that unites us in a shared pursuit of community well-being and enjoyment.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The estimate cost of the project is still to be determined. We would propose funding this project through a combination of municipal funds, grants, and potential partnerships with local businesses or organizations committed to community enhancement and/or interested in recreational facilities and sports.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

PUBLIC CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATIONS

A proactive approach to community engagement is a critical component of this project's success. Gathering input from local residents, sports organizations, and stakeholders will ensure that the design of the facility would align with the specific needs and preferences of our community. By involving the community in the decision-making process, we could foster a sense of ownership and pride in the facility, strengthening our collective commitment to its success. We intend on meeting with league representatives and user groups in late September to have a season debrief and plan for next year. We expect this topic to be raised and we will seek some initial feedback from them on this concept.

RECOMMENDATION

In light of the challenges posed by the current lack of proper restroom facilities, storage solutions and canteen space at the ball field, and the benefits outlined in the discussion section, **we recommend the pursuing the concept of a multi-purpose building that would include public washrooms, storage space and a canteen.** This project represents a vital step toward addressing the existing issues while simultaneously unlocking numerous benefits for the community, its members, and the efficient allocation of municipal resources.

If there were to be interest in pursuing this project, the next steps would include:

1. **Design and Planning:** Collaborate with architects and designers to create a facility design that meets accessibility standards, sustainability goals, and community preferences.
2. **Community Engagement:** Initiate community engagement efforts to solicit input, feedback, and support from sports organizations, and user groups.
3. **Cost Estimate:** Complete a cost estimate based on design options and include them for consideration during capital investment planning and/or budget deliberations.
4. **Construction and Completion:** Begin construction with a focus on timely completion, adherence to quality standards, and efficient resource utilization.

SUGGESTED MOTION

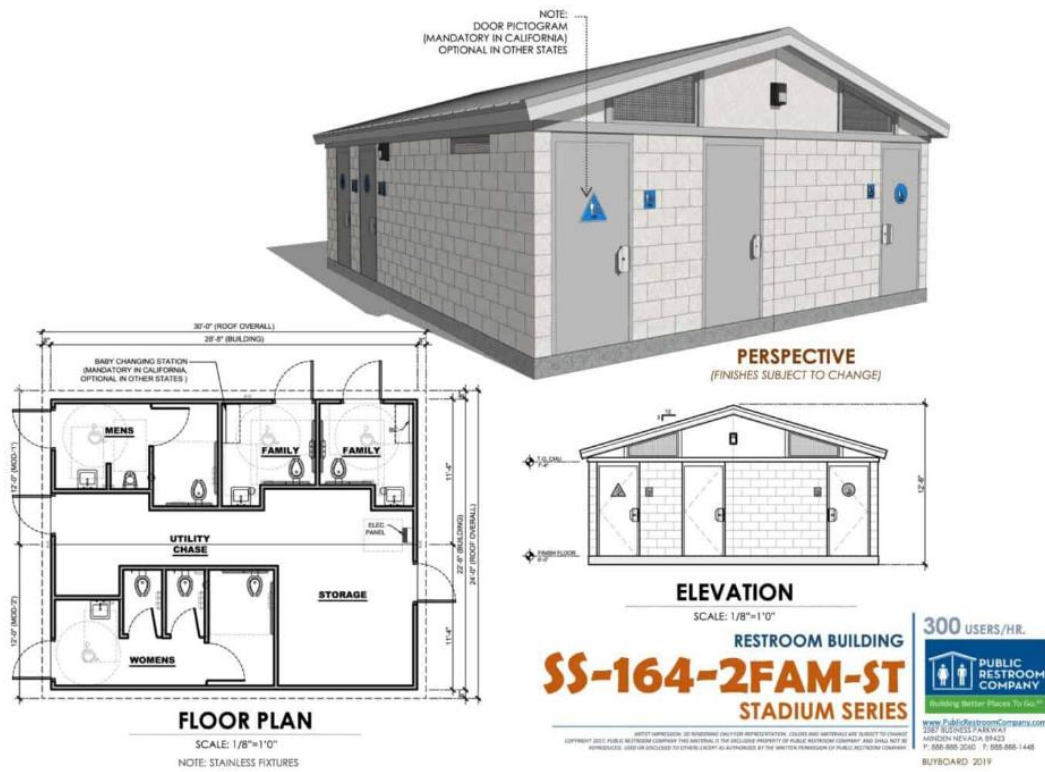
Move to gather information on potential designs and floorplans, along with cost estimates, for further consideration during the 2024/2025 budget deliberations.

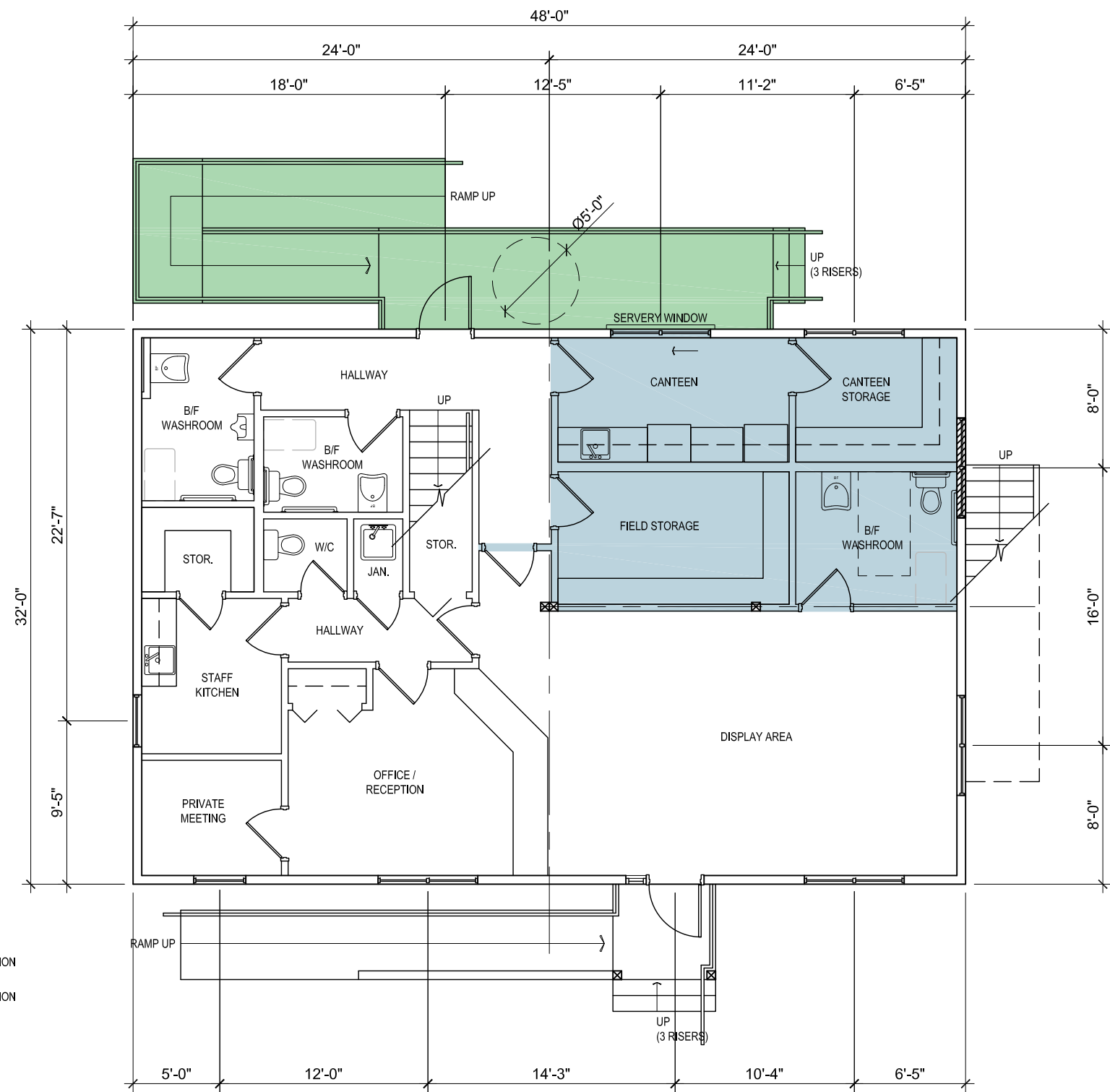
ALTERNATIVES

1. Place the project on our long-term capital investment plan for future consideration.
2. Pursue a design that includes only washrooms and a canteen or washrooms and storage.
3. Defer any decision on this project until further notice.

ATTACHMENTS

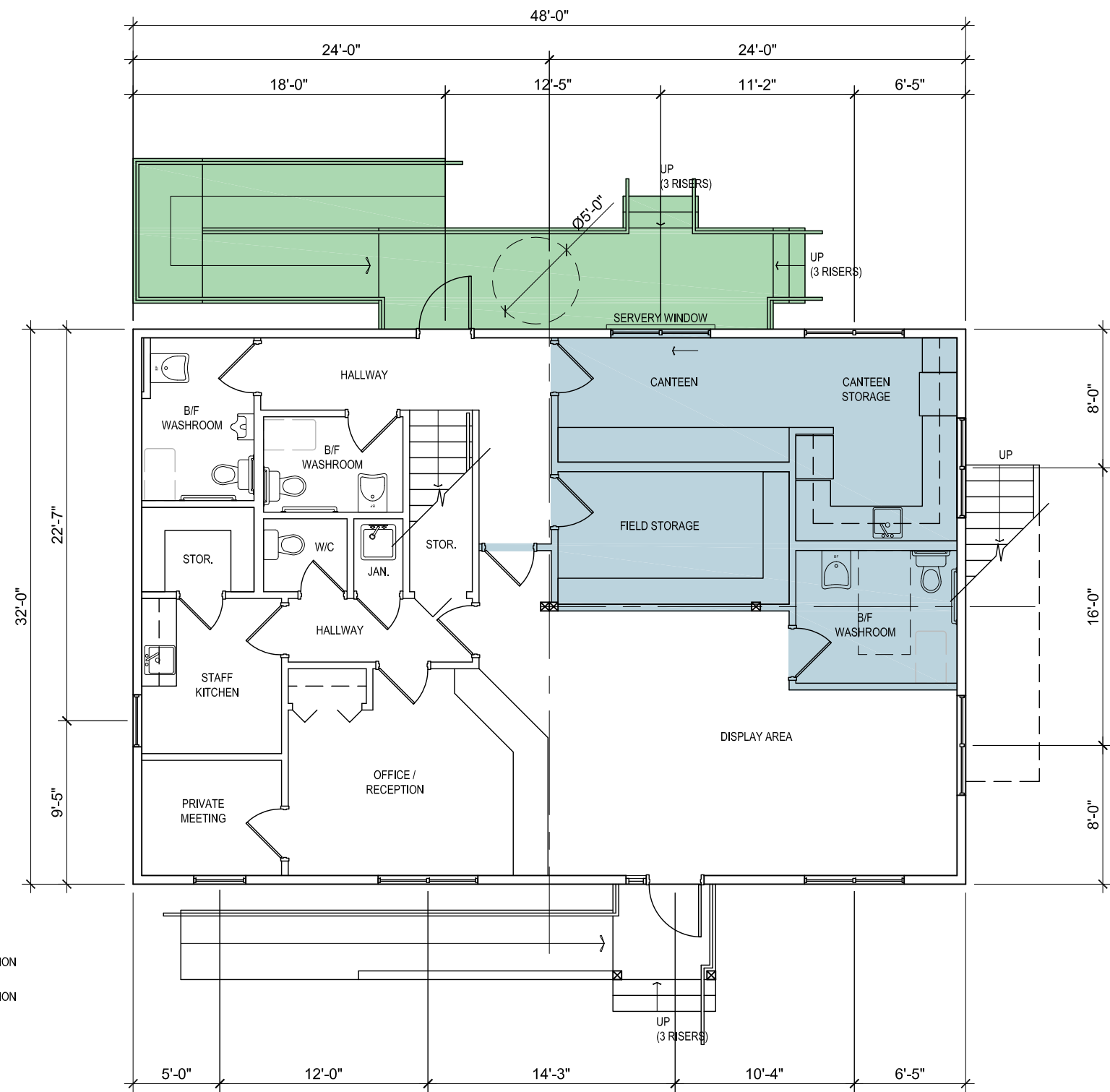
- Example Design and Floorplan





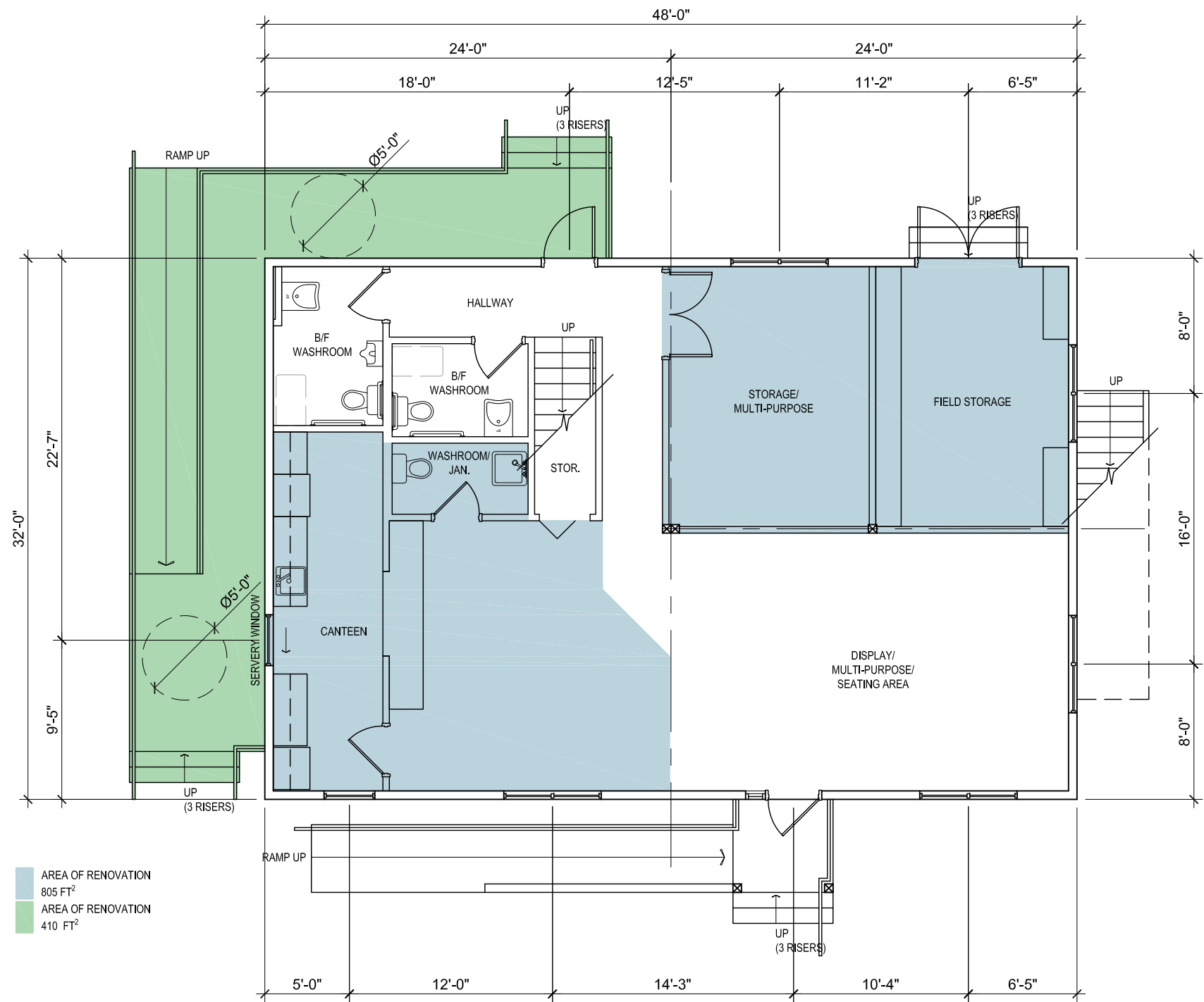
Canteen & Storage Facility

Plan - Option 1a



Canteen & Storage Facility

Plan - Option 1b



Canteen & Storage Facility

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Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Plan - Option 2