

Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) project

NewCAL Working Group Meeting					
Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2020					
Date: Zoom Meeting (online)					
Time: 9:30 AM					
Attendees:					
Alex Valcarce	Public Buildings Dept.	Y	Linda Walsh	Public Health Dept.	---
Amanda Berman	Planning Department	---	Maureen Lemieux	Chief Financial Officer	---
Barney Heath	Planning Department	Y	Nancy Scammon	Parks & Rec Dept.	---
Bea Goldsmith	Community Member	Y	Norm Meltz	Community Member	Y
Bob DeRubeis	Parks & Rec Dept.	---	Rachel Sherman	City IT	---
Brooke Lipsitt	Community Member	Y	Richard Rasala	Community Member	Y
Carol Schein	Community Member	Y	Sandra Butzel	Community Member	---
Deb Youngblood	Health/Human Services	---	Seth Bai	Veteran's Services	---
Devra Bailin	Planning Department	Y	Sue Rasala	Community Member	Y
Ellen Ishkanian	Mayor's Office	---	Susan Albright	City Councilor	Y
Gabriel Holbrow	Planning Department	---	Thomas Rooney	Public Buildings Dept.	---
Jack Neville	Parks & Rec Dept.	---	Zachery LeMel	Planning Department	---
Jayne Colino	Senior Services Director	Y			
Jini Fairley	Working Group	---	Tom Murphy	NV5	---
John Rice	Community Member	Y	Melissa Gagnon	NV5	Y
Jonathan Yeo	Chief Operating Officer	Y	Joel Bargmann	BH+A	Y
Josh Morse	Public Buildings Dept.	Y	James Bruneau	BH+A	Y

Josh Morse opened up the online Zoom meeting at 9:30AM.

In response to feedback at the last WG meeting, BH+A prepared the presentation Interim Review of NewCAL Planning Options at the Existing Senior Center Site on Walnut Street, dated April 14, 2020. Included were two options each for keeping the existing building as well as for all new construction.

Renovation of the Existing Building with an Addition - Option 1A and Option 3

Option 1A:

This is a variation of former Option 1. This concept includes a one-story addition across the front of the existing building, fronting Walnut Street with an accessible connection to the existing building via the original main entrance. Grade level program space is maximized, resulting in (20) garage spaces. A one-story addition wraps 1/2 the Walnut Street façade, around to Highland Avenue. Back addition would be 3 stories. A street level kitchen can be serviced via Highland Avenue or Walnut Place. This scheme could be adapted to not bump into Highland Avenue. The 2nd floor gym lobby could serve as an ante room for large events. The 3rd floor would house “destination programs” such as a track, fitness and ping pong vs. more casual, happenstance programs on the 1st and 2nd floors, including art rooms. This layout accommodates the full NewCAL SF requirements, with a 6200 SF gymnasium.

Option 3:

This concept has no addition in front of the existing building and provides a larger garage with (32) spaces, with thru traffic from Highland Avenue to Walnut Place. A 2-story wing along Highland Avenue would offer a distinct volume at the corner of Walnut and Highland (multipurpose room w/adjacent admin oversight) visible by the outside Community. A ramp and elevator connect the new entry lobby to the old lobby, with the outside wall of the existing building exposed as a feature. Similar to Option 1A, track/fitness programs are on 2nd and 3rd floors. A 2nd floor kitchen would need dedicated elevator service. Upper floor programming offers lots of flexibility, including the possibility of a roof deck.

A greater number of parking spaces directly correlates to less at grade programming. It was noted that if the 1st floor kitchen/dining/service area in Option 1A can be incorporated into Option 3, parking would be reduced to (20) spaces.

- *Options to mitigate the massing impact for neighbors will need to be studied.*
- *Options of historic renovation should be shown to the Community.*
- *Roofs of existing building should be rendered as a gray color, rather than white.*
- *Need to show the right balance of showing detail vs. no detail.*
- *The 1st floor and basement spaces may not be easy to reproduce and could offer 5000-6000 SF of usable programming space.*

New Construction - Option 4 and Option 5

Option 4:

This option maximizes parking with (54) spaces and all programming on the 2nd and 3rd floors, with the exception of the entry lobby and café on the 1st floor. With this large footprint, the gym could expand and a roof garden could be accommodated. The large footprint results in deep interior space, with some areas without windows. By pulling the building back, and the mass becoming more narrow, the deep space issue would be addressed. Similar to Options 1A and 3, the 3rd floor is the “destination” level with fitness, activity, track and roof garden.

- *It may be better to flip gym massing with the roof garden, to help mitigate neighborhood impact and keep larger massing opposite the church on Highland Avenue.*
- *The building could be four stories, which would pull massing back from the streets, and accommodate more green space at ground level, as well as stepped roof decks.*
- *How usable is green space is along Walnut Street?*
- *If the parking garage is smaller, the building could pull back from Walnut Street.*

Option 5:

This option offers a balance of at grade programming, while reducing parking to (30) spaces, with half covered. The building is pulled back to accommodate some green space along Walnut Street. The kitchen and dining are serviced on the 1st floor as well as a large multipurpose room and admin spaces. The gymnasium is on the 2nd floor, positioned along Highland Ave, opposite the church. The gym could be larger resulting in more covered parking. Similar to Options 1A and 3, the 3rd floor is the “destination” level with fitness, activity, track and potential expansion space.

- *Can the Walnut Street façade be stepped back?*
- *By rotating the gym, more parking lot would be covered and the building could step back from Walnut Street.*
- *Possible for tables and chairs at an upper roof deck, overlooking Newtonville?*
- *BH+A will create an Option 6, as a variation of Option 5 set back from Walnut Street.*
- *There are 30 spaces in this option plus 30 spaces currently on Highland Ave. Parking program is met with an additional 15 spaces in Newtonville (Austin Street lot).*

General Discussion:

- *BH+A was asked to include onsite parking spaces to the Area Summaries for Interim Options.*
- *Parking: Per the current pattern, traffic should continue to be one way, entering from Walnut Place and exiting onto Highland Avenue, rather than through traffic.*
- *Parking: Angled parking vs. head end parking will be studied. If the garage were narrower, the building may be able to slide back from Walnut Street.*
- *On site plantings will be evaluated to determine salvage or replication.*
- *With regard to the neighborhood, consideration should be made to the taller mass being closer to the corner of Highland Avenue and Walnut Street, and stepping down/back closer to the residential properties.*
- *Possible 4th floor programming to consider would be a library, roof garden (Tai Chi), lounge and administrative areas.*
- *The clustering or distribution of administrative programming shall be considered.*
- *The thought is that the cost/SF is relatively the same for renovating the existing building vs. new construction.*
- *There is a strong focus in Newton for green building. The design team should be mindful of Passive House Standards, when addressing energy usage and building air tightness.*
- *Concrete vs. steel construction will need to be considered relative to the embodied carbon footprint, overall building height, etc.*
- *With regard to the Newton Center triangle site, Option 5 for Newtonville (or a variation thereof) can be considered as a stand alone plan to be adapted.*

Upcoming Community Meeting and City Outreach

With regard to the upcoming Community meeting (via Zoom) on May 7, 2020, there was consensus to no longer pursue Option 1A, which wraps an addition around the front of the existing building. The thought is that one option of an add/reno and two options new construction (with variables of gym orientation and set back from Walnut Street) should be presented.

Per prior community meetings and studies, it has been determined that pursuing the Newton Center site will have an extended schedule and will exceed the project budget.

Next steps include the City meeting (via Zoom) with Newtonville area businesses on 4/21/20. Devra will send minutes to Josh for distribution.

The City will consider a meeting with the Newtonville Area Council.

The Planning Department will send plans for the Rehabilitation of Walnut Street to Josh and Alex. Susan Albright requested plans be forwarded to Ward councilors.

Upcoming Meetings

All upcoming meetings will be online with remote participation via Zoom:

- 04/21/20 Working Group meeting - 9:30AM
- 04/28/20 Working Group meeting - 9:30AM
- 05/07/20 Community meeting (to be confirmed) - 7:00PM



Interim Review of NewCAL Planning Options at the Existing Senior Center Site on Walnut Street

Working Group Meeting
April 14, 2020

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bh+a

Bargmann Hendrie+ Archetype, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

This presentation is intended to refine viable options that were presented to the Working Group two weeks ago. We encourage the continued feedback from the Working Group to help refine these options before presenting to the public. We will have another opportunity to review and refine plans two weeks from tomorrow, prior to the public meeting.

We have narrowed down the options to four, two incorporating the existing building and two all new options.

Retain Existing Building

This presentation shows advancement of two options that retain the existing building. The goal, with consensus of the Working Group, is to reduce this to a single option for the public presentation.

The options presented explore how much of the program can be located at grade. To maximize ground level program means encroaching over the front (Walnut Street) façade of the existing building with new construction. We suggest that wrapping the entire front of the building as shown two weeks ago is not desirable aesthetically or functionally. The two options for this presentation enclosed half or none of the front of the building.

The existing building provides a relatively small amount of program area. As one member of the Working Group points out, the most generous estimate for available program space out of the existing building is 4,380 sf. With floor levels that are not continuous with grade level and offset from the new floor levels. The obvious question is how much does the existing building compromise the layout for a relatively small gain and is that compromise warranted by retention of the existing.

On the other hand, the two original reading rooms and the central lobby area are incorporated into these options. These are generous, high ceiling spaces with architectural detail that would not be recreated in new construction.



The original cross section drawing of the Library showing the raised main floor level 5 feet above outside grade



The outside stairs take you up three feet to a landing



Then, inside stairs take you up the final two feet to the main floor level.



The stairs lead to a grand central organizing space in between the two flanking reading rooms.



One or both of the basement level wings would retain their windows in the proposed concepts that do not cover the front façade of the existing building. This could be secondary use space assuming that the elevator is brought to this level.



All schemes show the entry point to NewCAL as being along Highland Avenue in this general area



The schemes envision using the extra width of Highland Avenue to advantageously create drop off or short term parking spaces but this is not absolutely necessary for any of the schemes. Resolving this use to the benefit of NewCAL may be a complicating factor and thus, it becomes a key decision point.

All New Construction

The second section of this presentation explores two options that show removal of the existing building and replacement with a new NewCAL building. These options demonstrate an essential discussion and decision; “what is more valuable, parking space or program space”. One option maximizes on-site at grade parking while a second option provides for less parking and more program space at the entry level of the building. It is envisioned that these two options will be carried forward to the public presentation.

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Retain Existing Building in the NewCAL Planning Options

Option 1A: new construction encroaches on the front of the existing building with greater program area at the entry level

Option 3: construction does not encroach on the front of the existing building with less program area at the entry level

All new Building for NewCAL

Option 4: Optimize the amount of parking at grade at the expense of program area at grade

Option 5: Have less parking at grade to optimize the amount program area at grade

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PERSPECTIVES

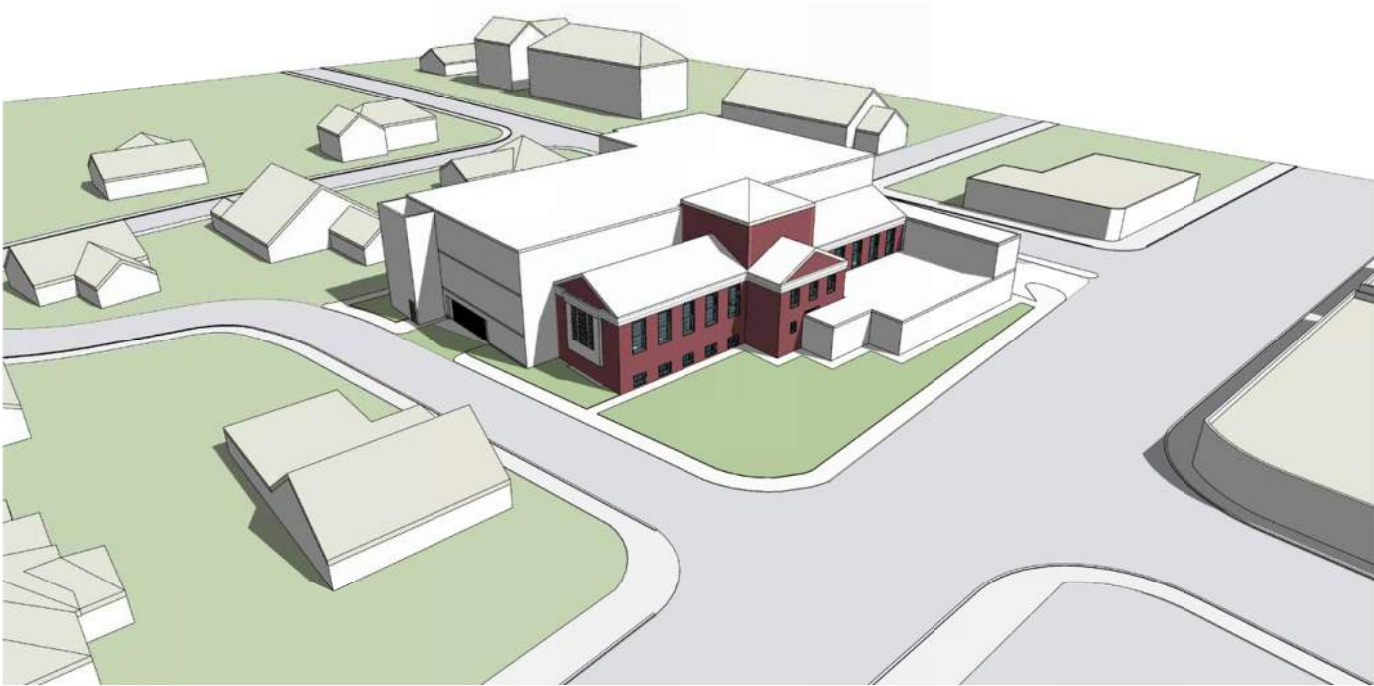
Studies reusing the existing building explore different ways that NewCAL program space could be located at ground level. A major portion of the site is located between Walnut Street and The face of the existing building. While we have looked at the extreme of covering the front of the building with one or two levels or new space, functional and aesthetic considerations make this option less than desirable.

Perspective 2 shows encroaching on only half of the façade (the north wing) with a connector to the entry to provide an accessible connecting point. Light would continue to get to half of the basement space with this option.

Perspective 3 leaves the entire front of the building uncovered. The addition does need to extend to Walnut street to provide sufficient floor area for NewCAL. This would be a two story element providing an entry and visibility of NewCAL program spaces to the passing traffic.



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Note regarding all options:

As you review the options note that all are of a similar overall size and incorporate a 6,200 sf gym. Not all program spaces are shown and certain adjacencies may be further developed. At this phase, the details often get in the way of the big picture which is what these options concern. Focusing on whether one option has a better administrative space layout is premature. In fact, a few program spaces such as administration have been located on different floor levels or locations on the plans to spur discussion and resolution as to best solutions.

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OPTION 1A

Option 1A is the new variation on the former option 1 which proposed a one story addition across the entire frontage of the existing building. It was a logical attempt to get as much NewCAL program at grade level as possible. addition only across half of the Walnut Street frontage. It makes an accessible connection to the existing building via what was the original main entry. This option has a 20 car garage taking the approach that program space at grade level is more important to parking space.

The existing building is used for its large spaces and the central two story entry space remains.

Other than the one story addition wrapping the Highland Avenue and portion of Walnut Avenue facades, the three story portions of NewCAL stay to the rear of the existing building.

In this option, administration is on grade in a relatively prominent location. The dining and activity rooms are also at grade further to the west on Highland Avenue where the kitchen can be more easily serviced from either Highland or Walnut terrace.

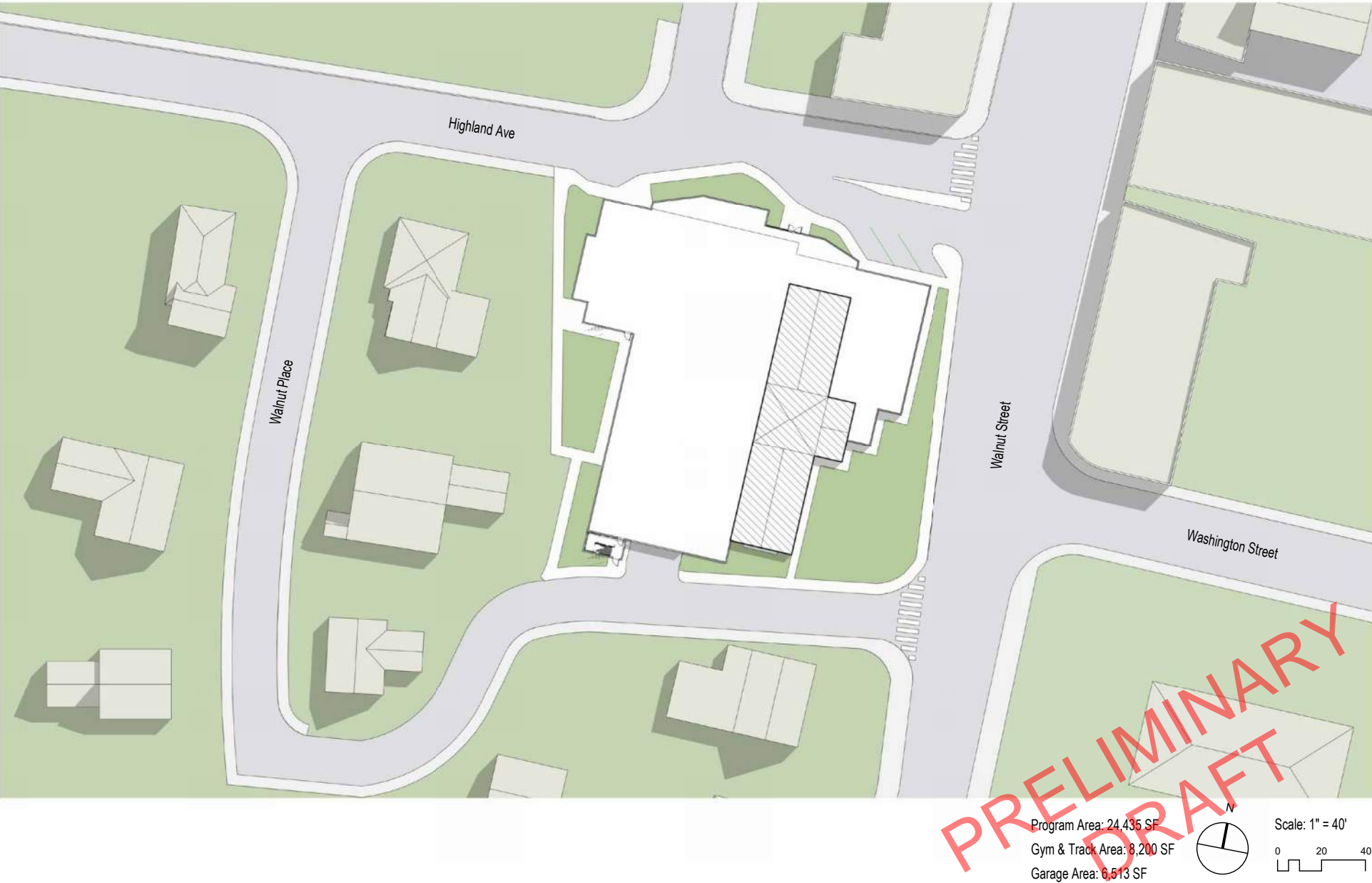
The Gym, gym lobby that may be needed for large events and more program space is on the second floor. The third floor has the walking track, fitness and Activity spaces including billiards and ping pong. Those are destination spaces and can afford to be on the upper levels.

A second elevator is feasible and its need is being investigated.

Option 1A has approximately 31,000 sf of total floor area. The smaller gym and track account for the major portion of the area differential from the original program.

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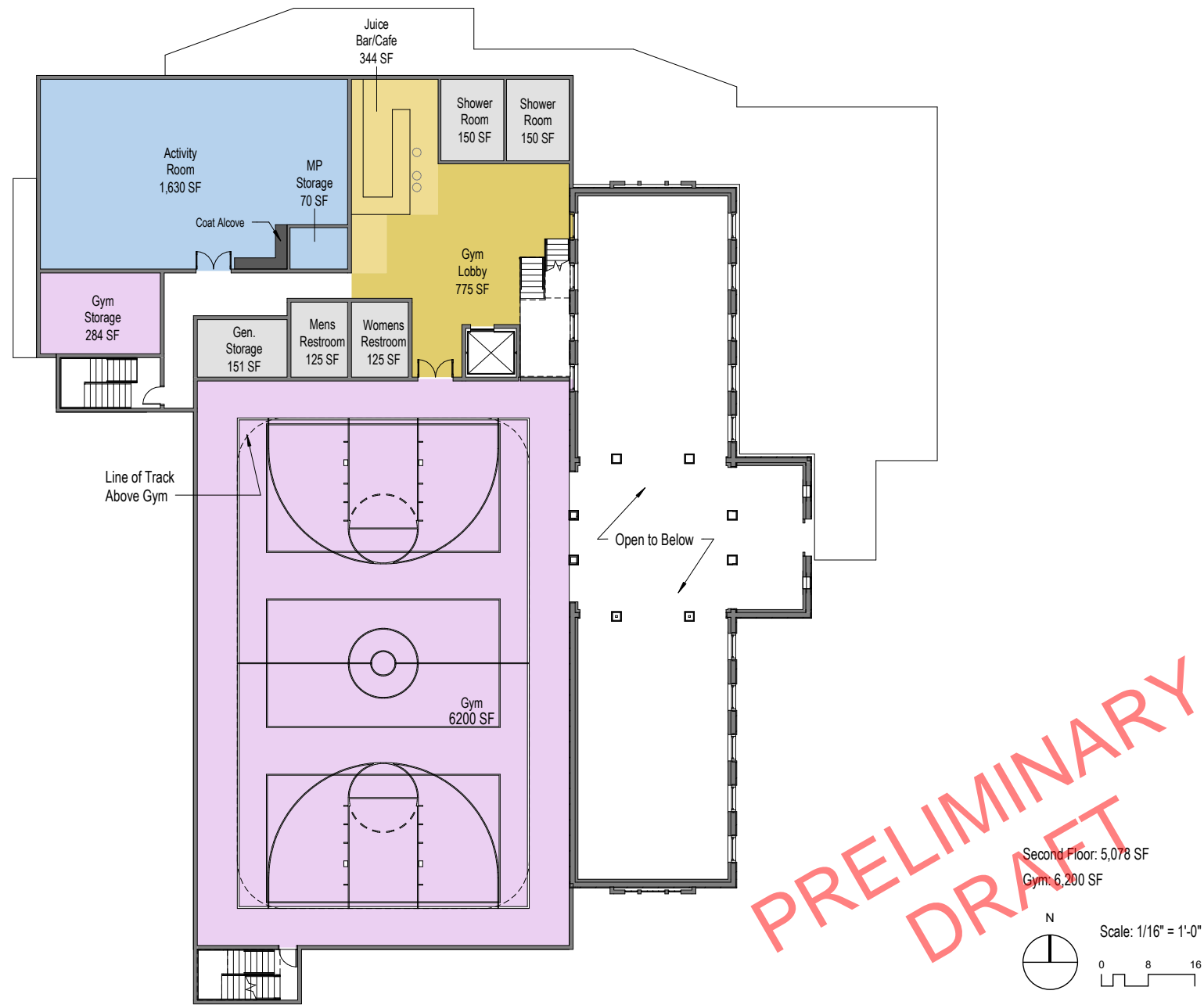
OPTION 1A Site Plan



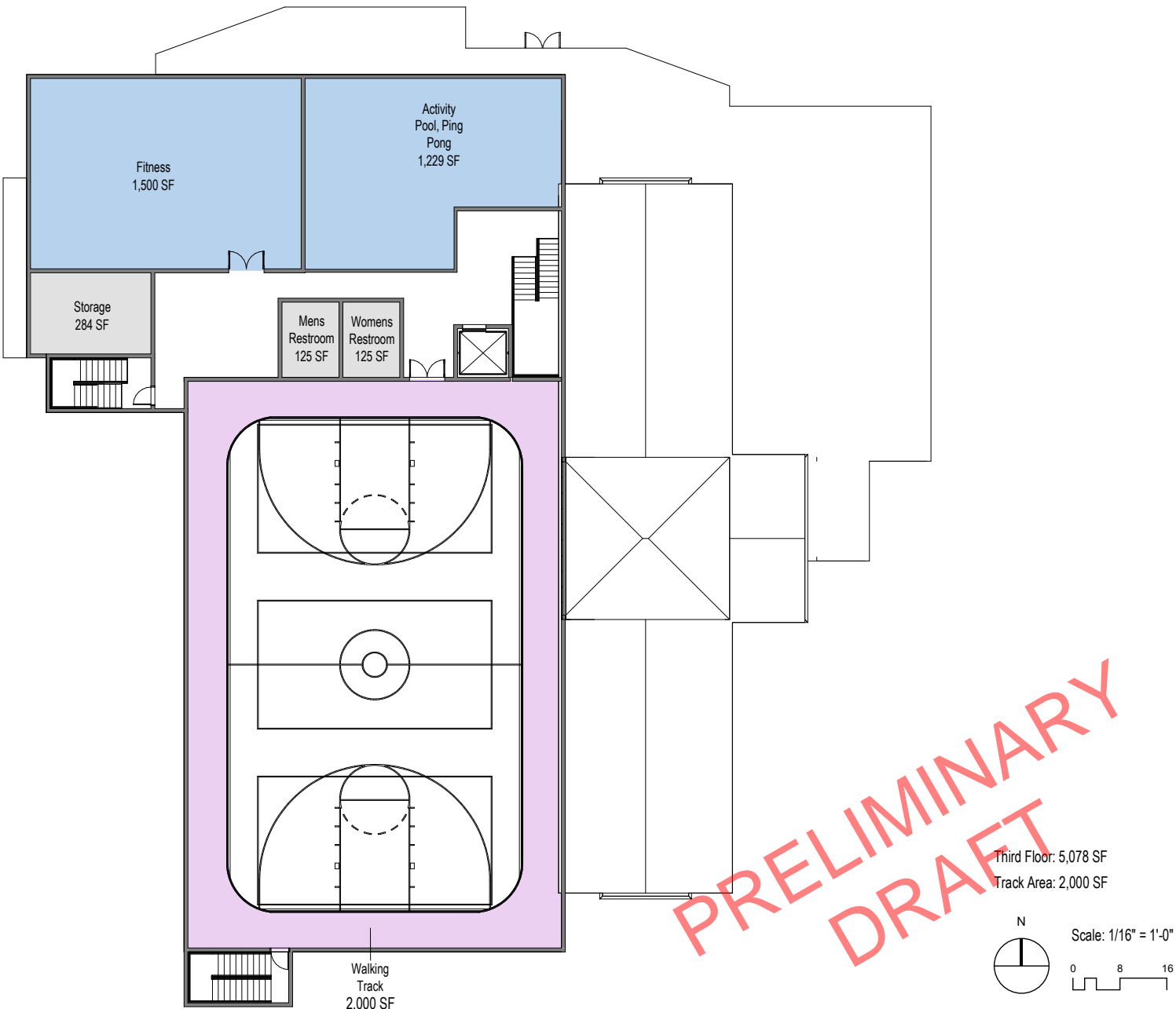
OPTION 1A First Floor Plan



OPTION 1A Second Floor Plan



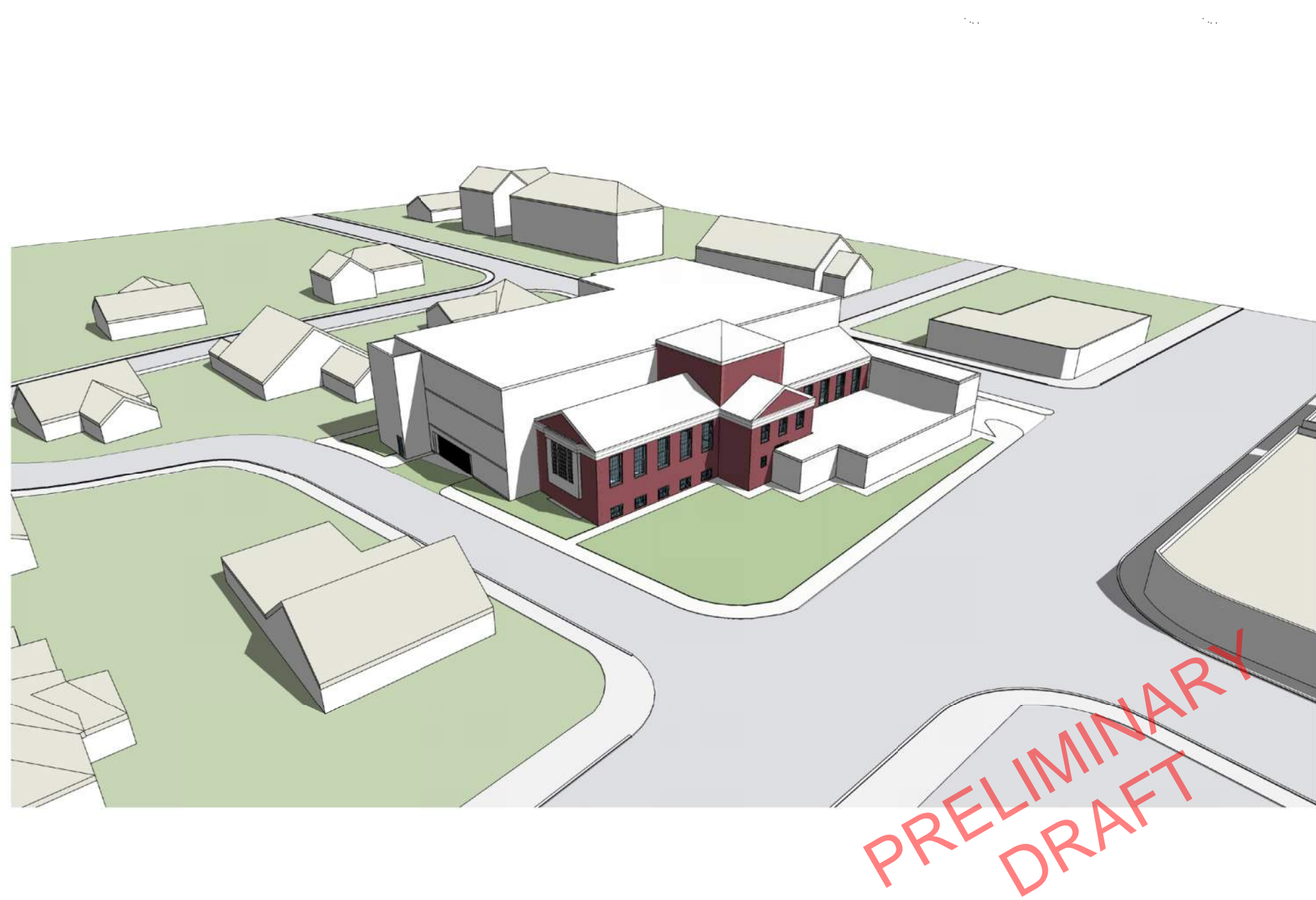
OPTION 1A Third Floor Plan



OPTION 1A Aerial View



OPTION 1A Aerial View



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OPTION 3

Option 3 does not locate any program area in front of the existing building along Walnut Street. It also provides a larger garage extending across the entire site from Walnut Place to Highland Avenue (32 spaces). The option proposes a two story wing along Hillside Avenue that gives NewCAL a prominent front on Walnut Street. Option 3 puts a program space on the “hot corner”, a way of making NewCAL programming and activity visible to the City. The existing space can be used for meeting and program spaces with the central lobby space being preserved.

As with all options, the gym is on the second floor and the track on the third. A logistical issue with this option will be the kitchen location on the second floor. A service elevator is added for delivery and trash removal. Service access is from Highland Avenue or Walnut Terrace.

Fitness, and Multi-Purpose space is located on the 3rd floor.

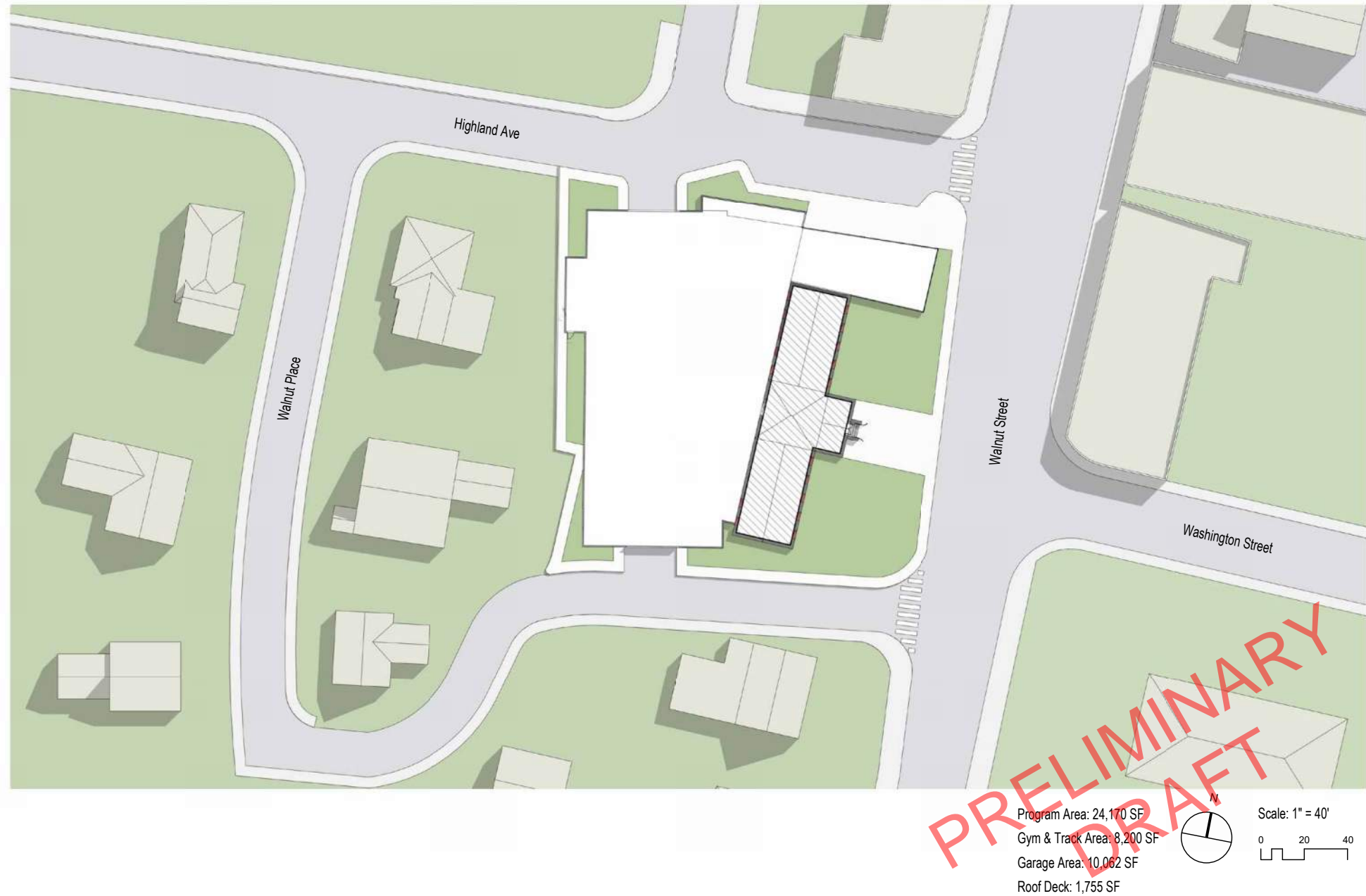
This scheme is perhaps the most dependent on the extra space gained from realignment of Highland Ave. It is also constrained by the geometry resulting from the positioning of the garage relative to the existing building.

Option 3 is shown to demonstrate trade-offs. It could be adapted to be similar to option 1A at ground level via reduction of the garage footprint. This would bring the kitchen and dining back to grade level where it is most practical. The parking/program trade-off appears to be one of the key decision points.

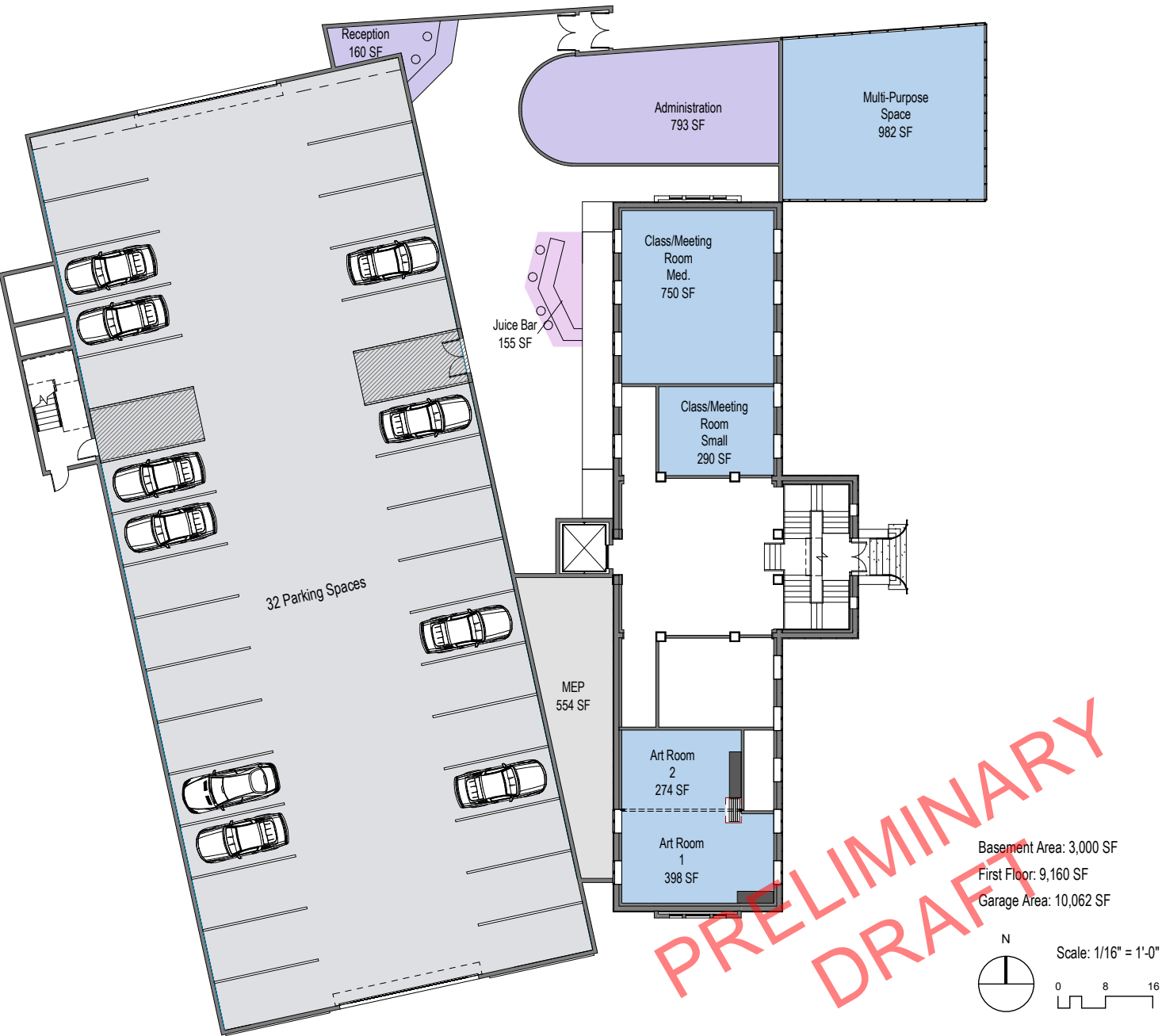
One nice feature of Option 3 is how the existing building is incorporated with the new building. A ramp and elevator connect the lobby level with the main entry lobby of the existing building. This half level then leads to the second level via an open stair or elevator. A skylight and open floor connect all three levels and exposes the outside wall of the existing building. Architecturally, Option 3 could be one of the more interesting schemes, especially if the garage space was reduced similar to Option 1A.

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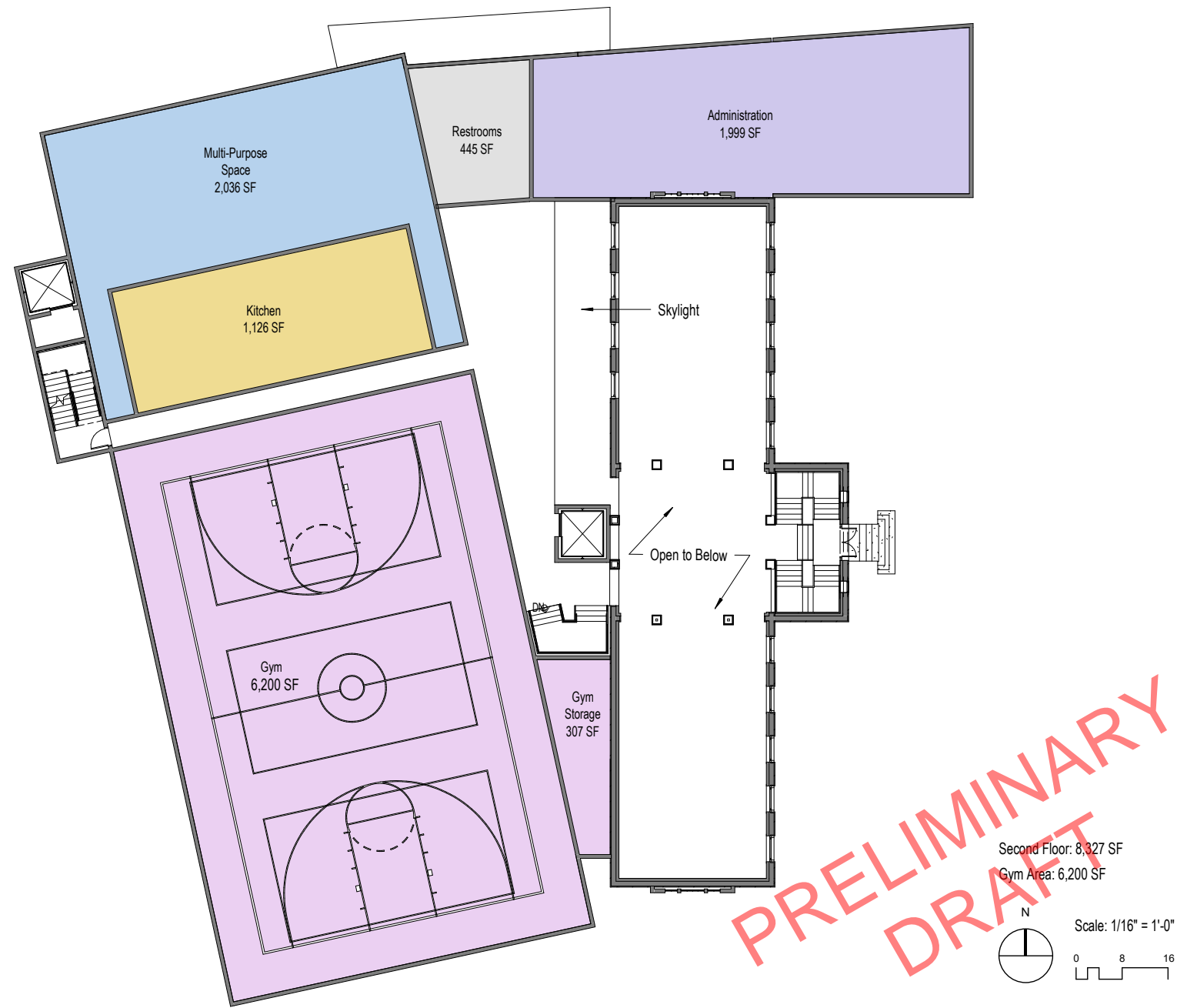
OPTION 3 Site Plan



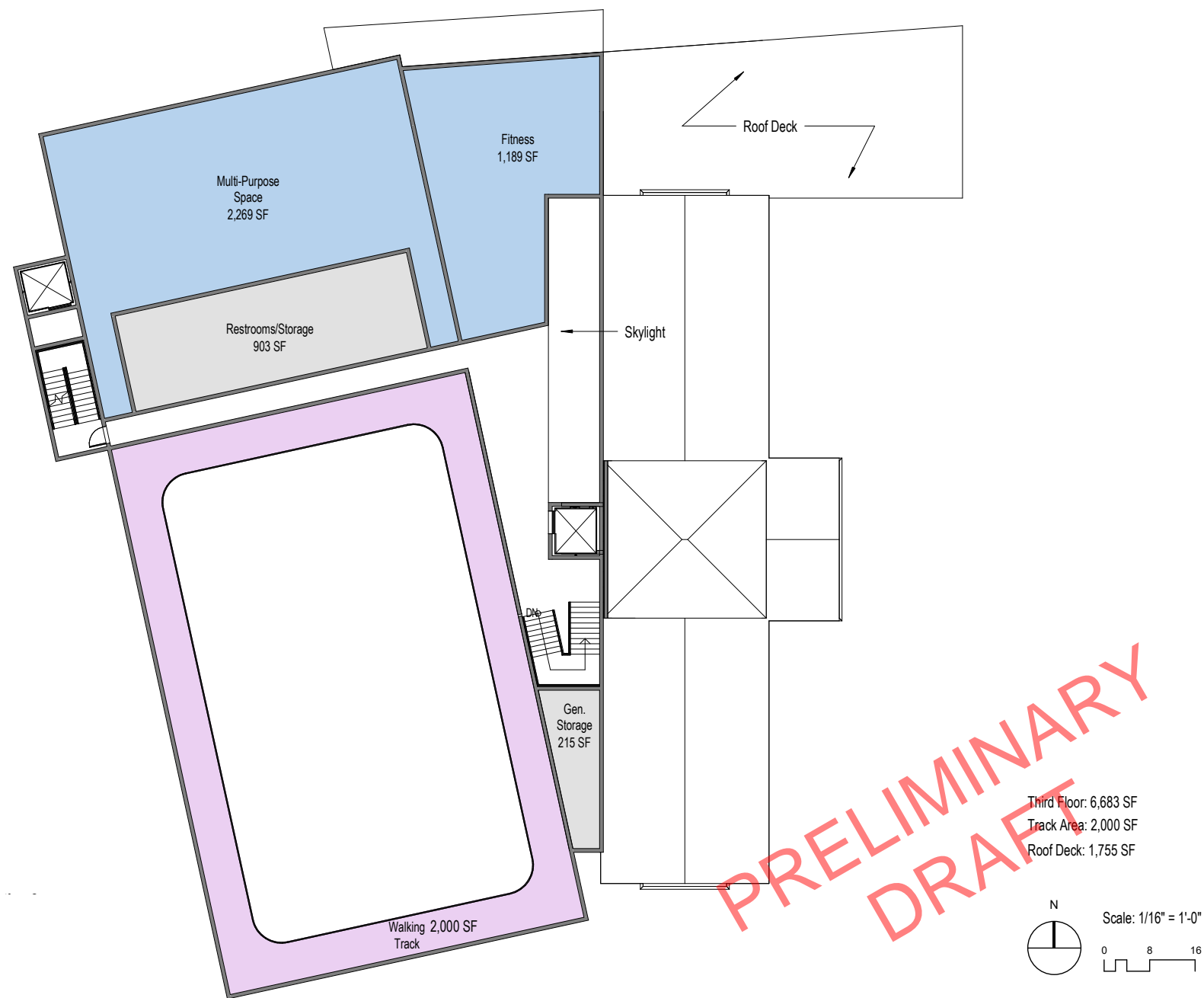
OPTION 3 First Floor Plan



OPTION 3 Second Floor Plan



OPTION 3 Third Floor Plan



OPTION 3 Aerial View



OPTION 3 Aerial View



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OPTION 4

Option 4 is an all new NewCAL which does not have to address issues related to the existing building. This version is an exploration of the maximum amount of parking space that the site will support. It provides 54 spaces. Again the question is the relation ship of parking to program space as this scheme has relatively little space at the street level. On the other hand, it has plenty of space on levels 2 and 3 and includes an outdoor deck as well as expansion space. The large floor plate results in second floor space that does not have windows. If this version is considered for further study, we suggest that the second and third floor levels be cut back to form a narrow floor plate with better natural light. The other benefit of this option is that the gym could be enlarged to the original program size. The track gets larger as a result. That would also solve the “deep floor plate” issue. The third floor is again the destination level with fitness, activity space, the track and ample outdoor roof deck area.

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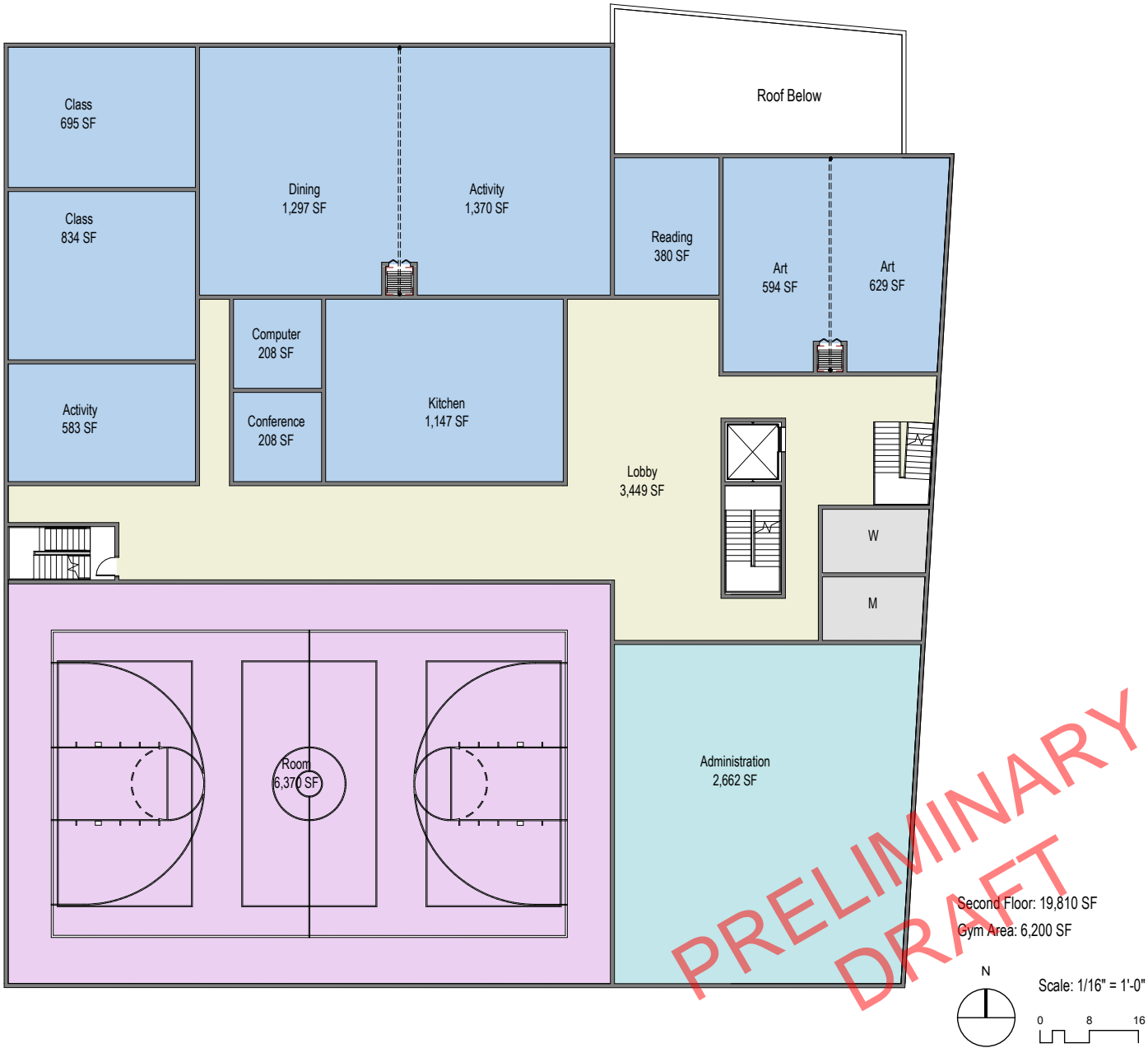
OPTION 4 Site Plan



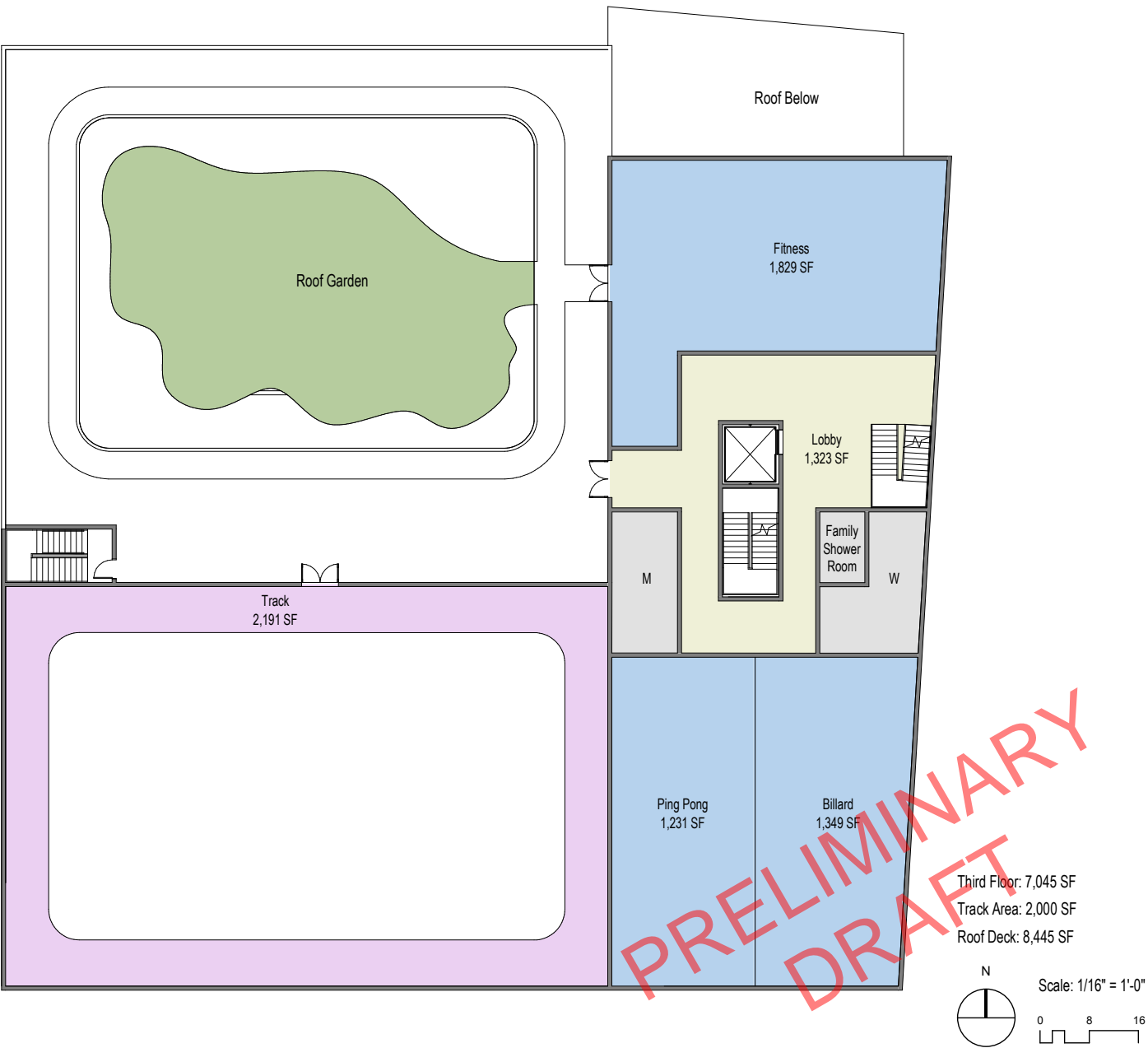
OPTION 4 First Floor Plan



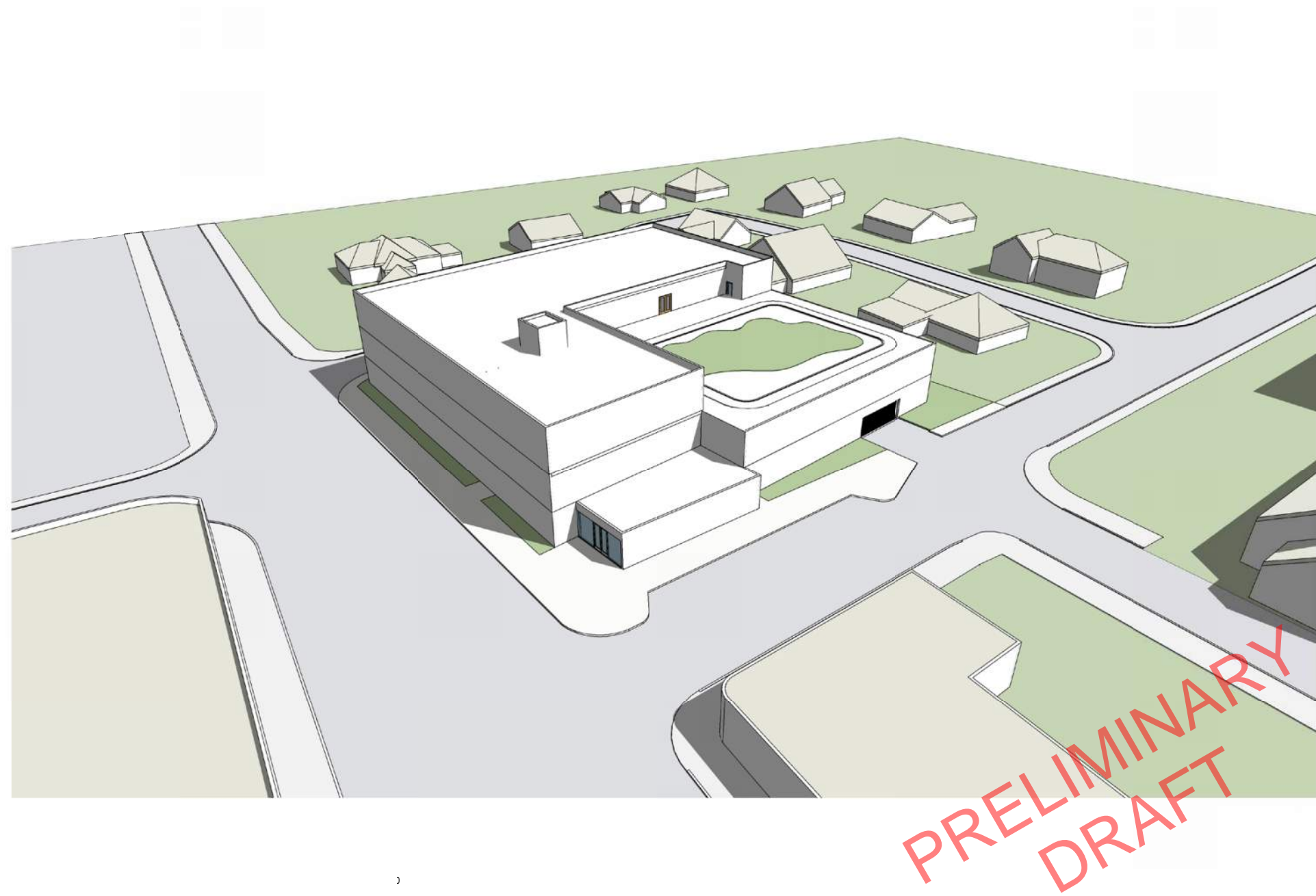
OPTION 4 Second Floor Plan



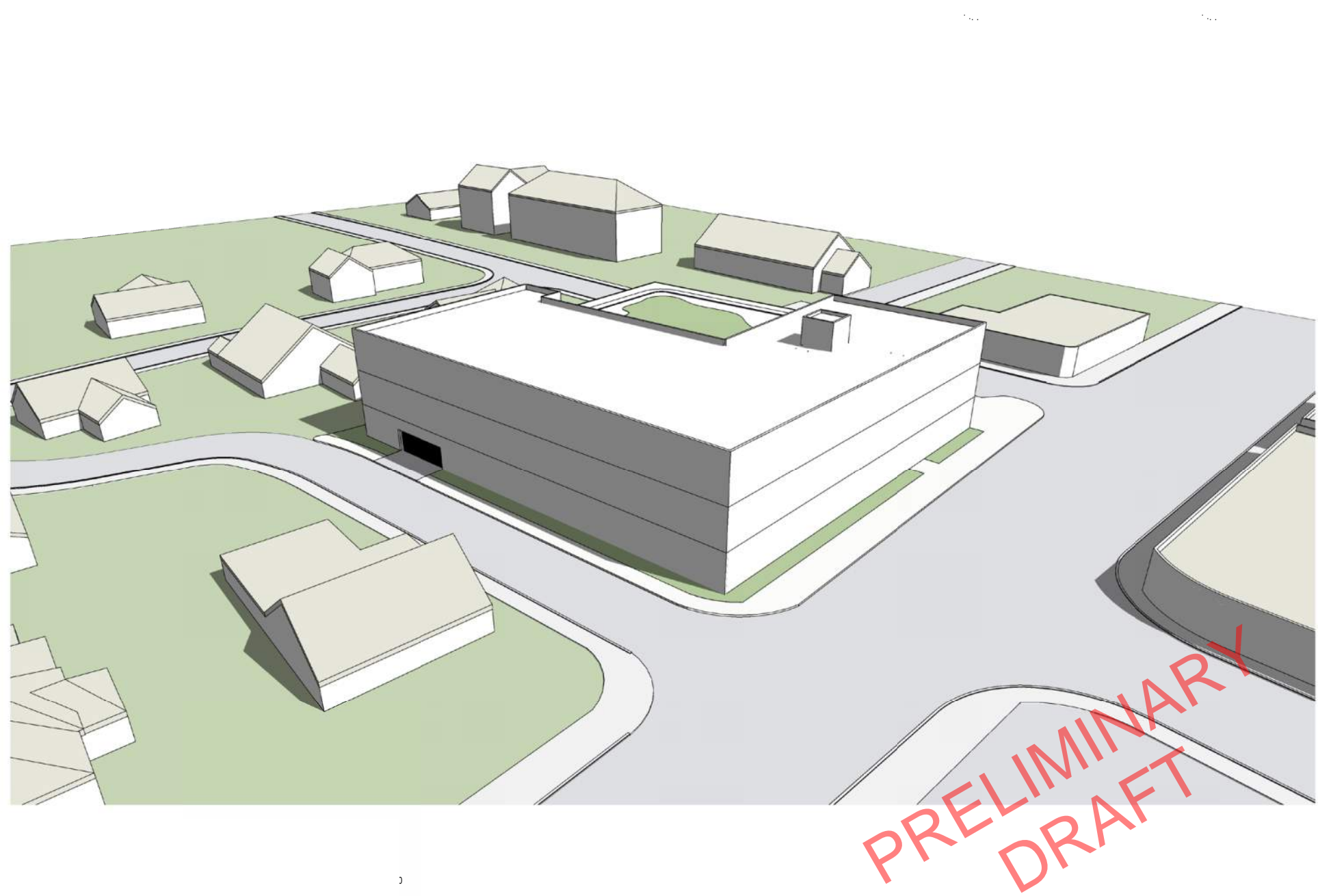
OPTION 4 Second Floor Plan



OPTION 4 Aerial View



OPTION 4 Aerial View



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OPTION 5

Option 5 provides more program space at grade while reducing the parking count to 30 spaces. It is a relatively efficient “L-shaped” scheme where in a good portion of the parking is not covered and thus, less costly to construct. This options provides both activity and dining at grade along with administrative space. The second floor has program space and again the third floor has the destination spaces of walking track, Fitness and Activity spaces. Like Option 4, the gym could be enlarged to the original program area if desired. As three stories on Walnut Avenue, it is taller than the abutting properties.

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OPTION 5 Site Plan



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Program Area: 32,020 SF
Gym & Track Area: 8,200 SF

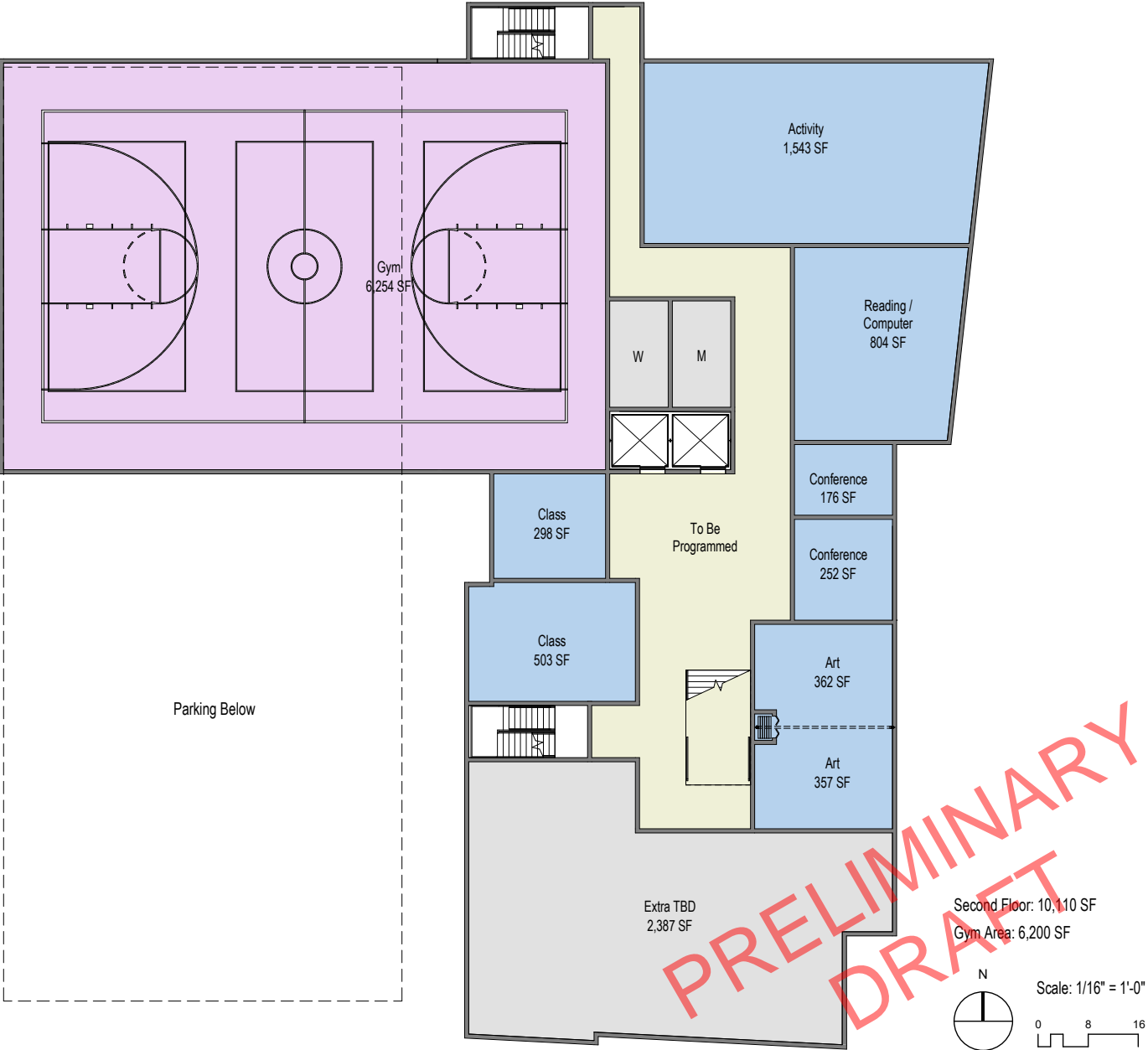
Scale: 1" = 40'

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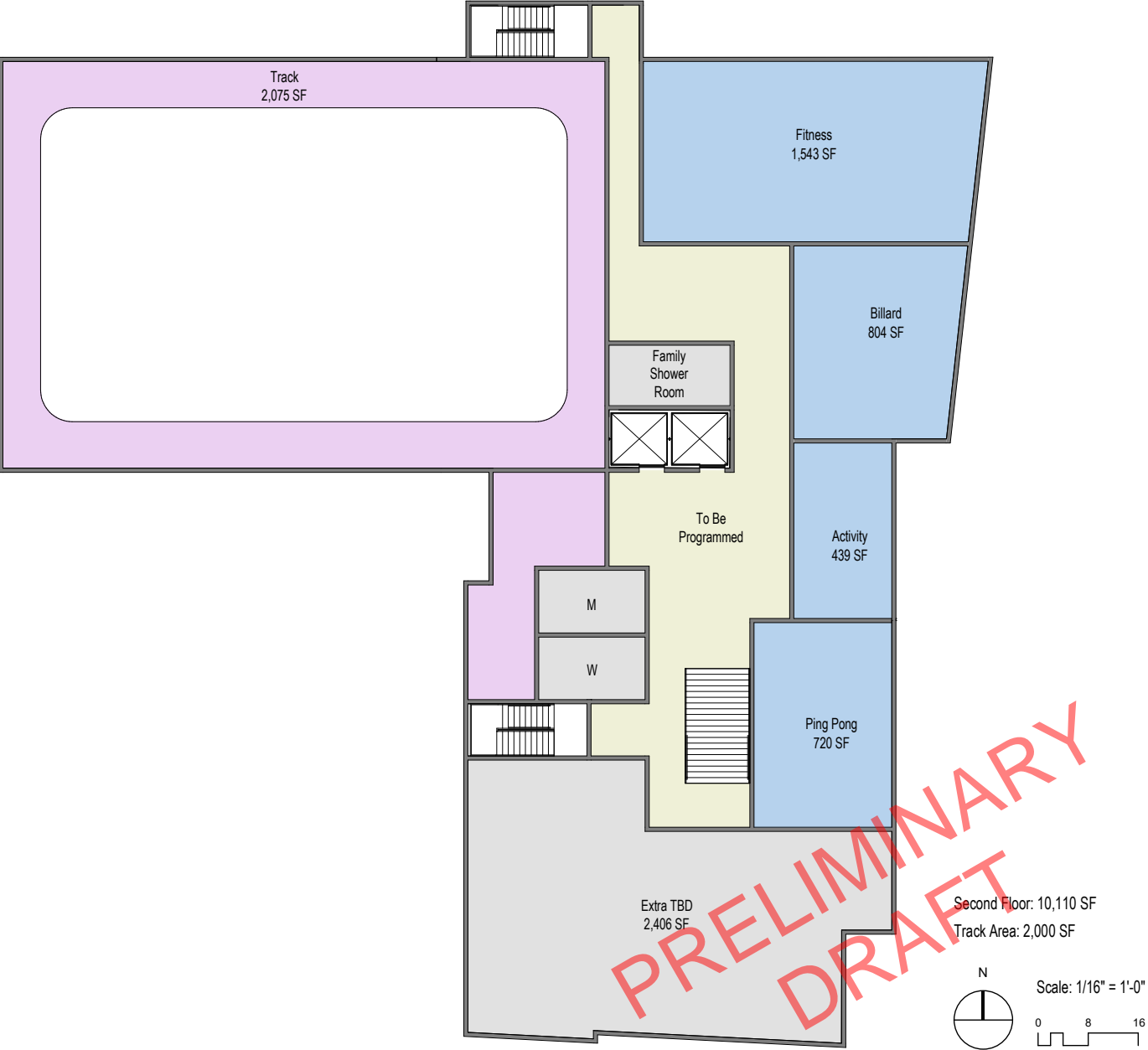
OPTION 5 First Floor Plan



OPTION 5 Second Floor Plan



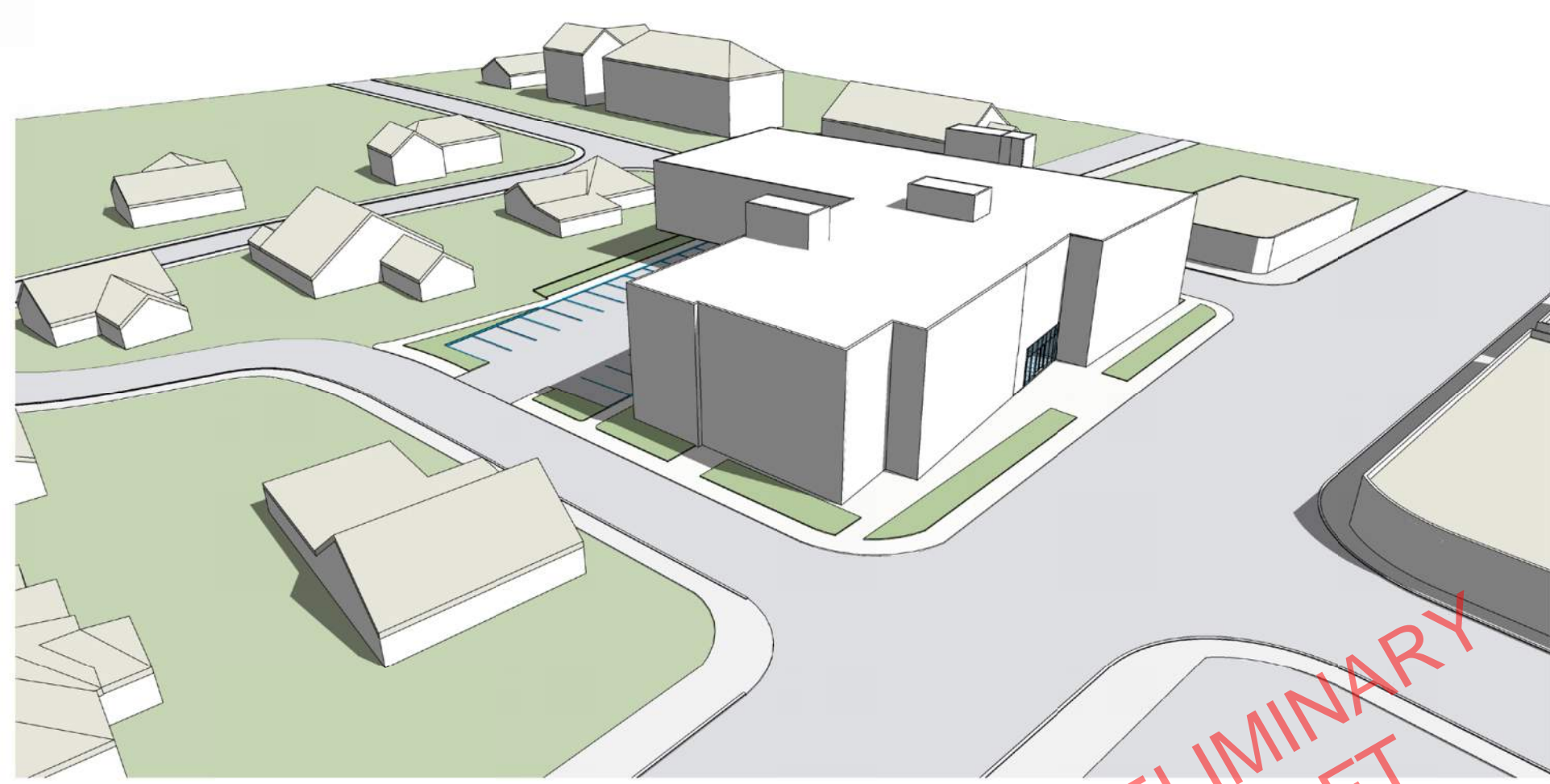
OPTION 5 Third Floor Plan



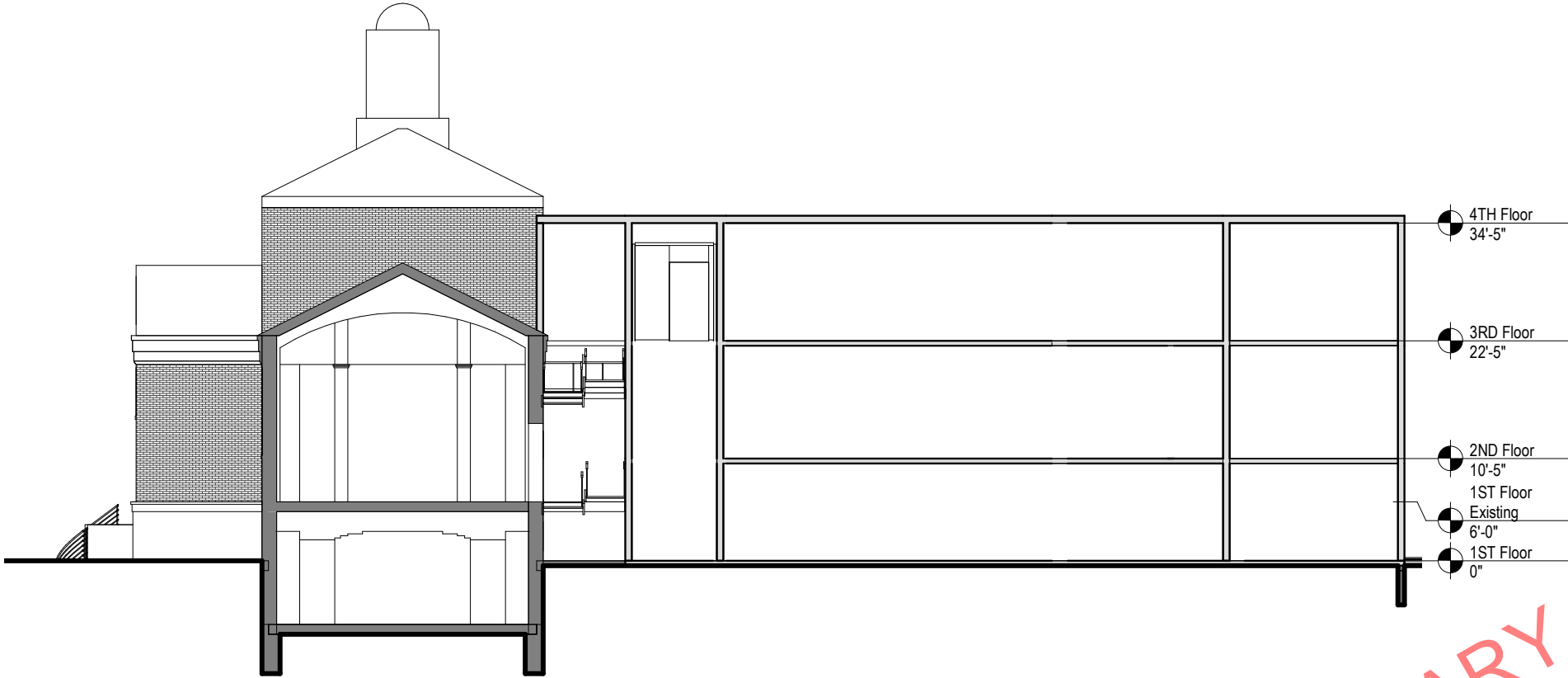
OPTION 5 Aerial View



OPTION 5 Aerial View



Building Section

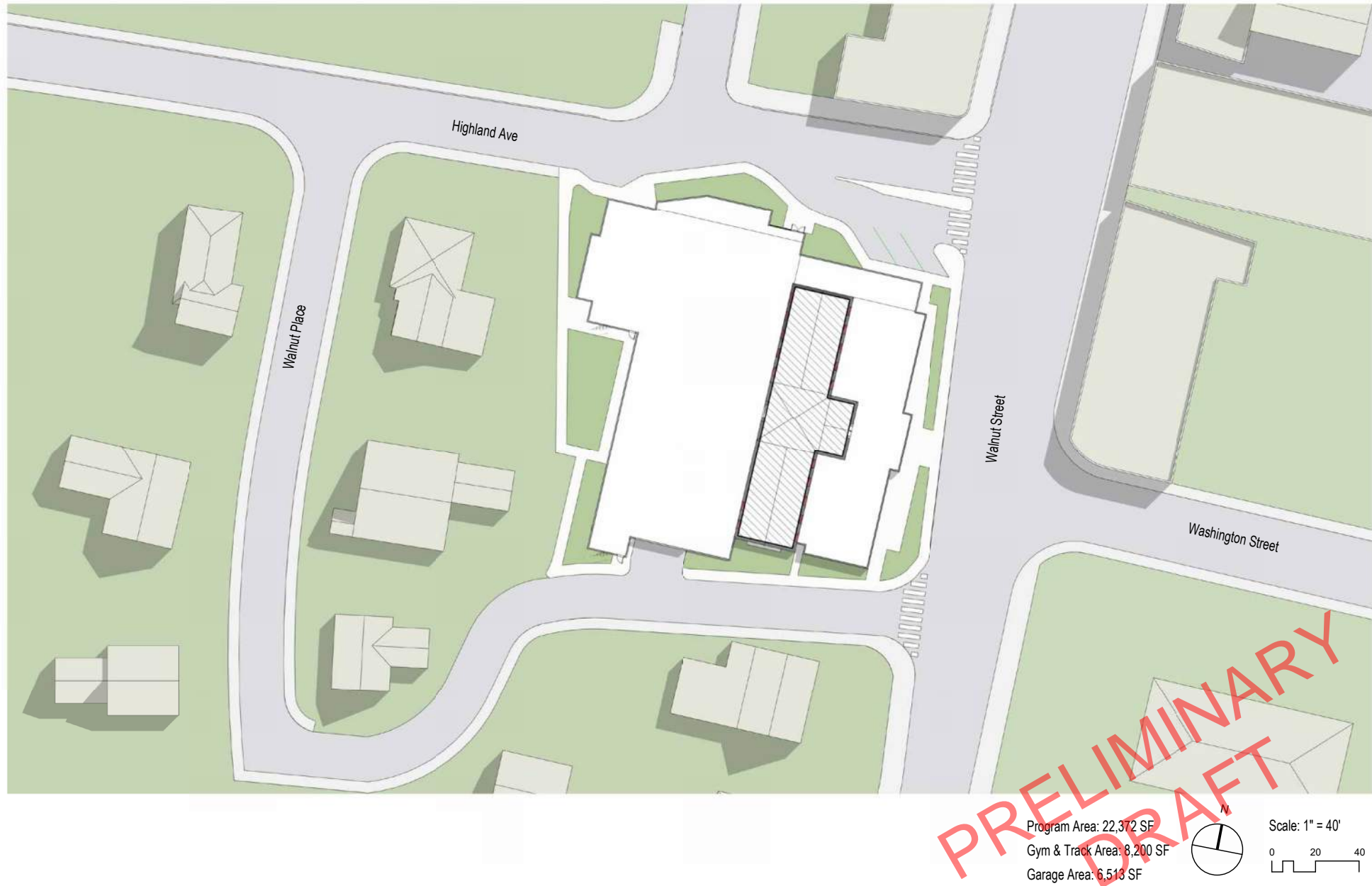


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APPENDIX

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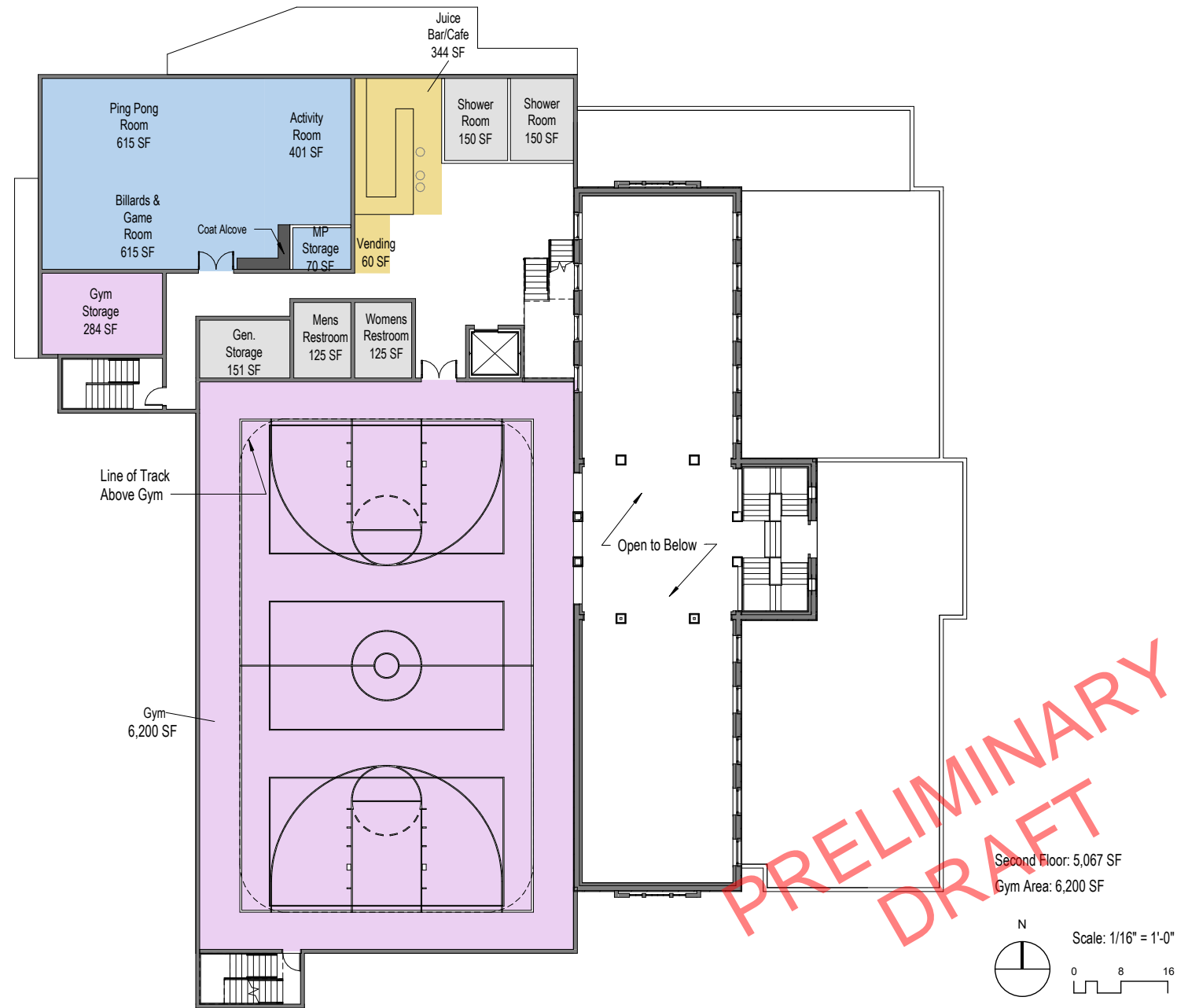
OPTION 1 Site Plan



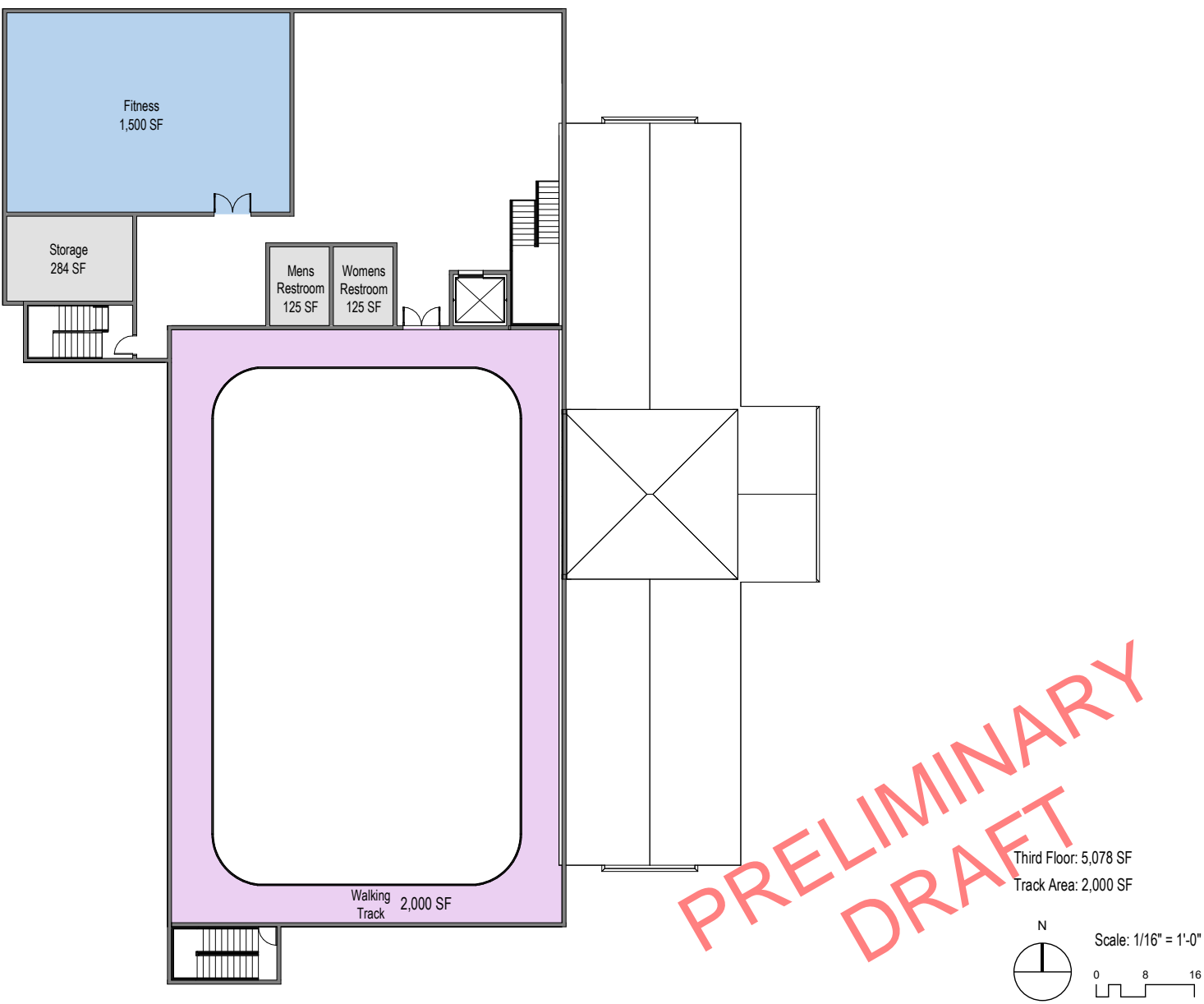
OPTION 1 First Floor Plan



OPTION 1 Second Floor Plan



OPTION 1 Third Floor Plan

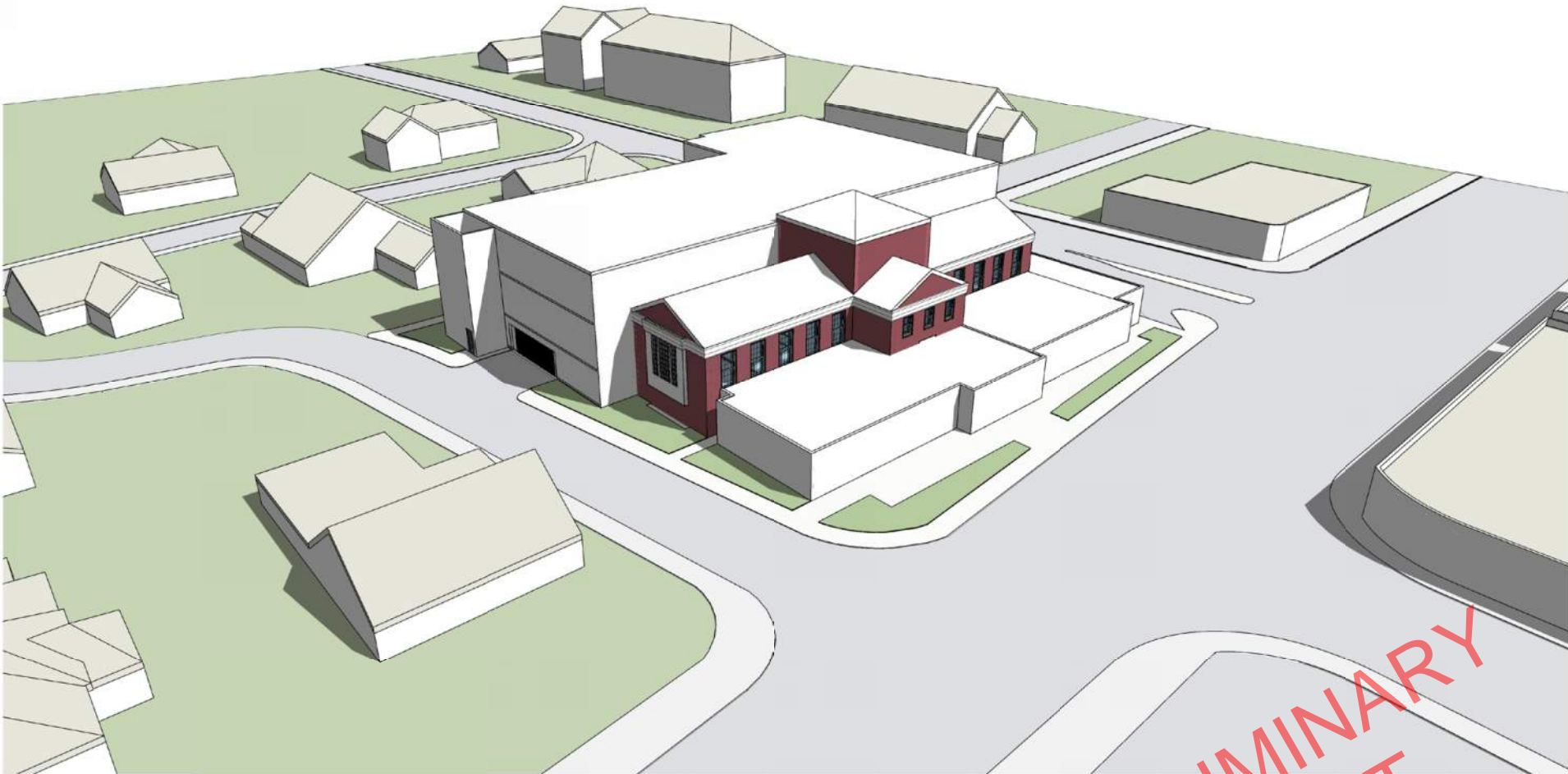


OPTION 1 Aerial View



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OPTION 1 Aerial View



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AREA SUMMARIES FOR INTERIM OPTIONS

	incorporate existing building		all new construction					
	Option 1A	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	program with 6,200 sf gym	program with 9,800 sf gym		note
program area	24,500	24,200	33,000	31,300	23,088	23,088	sf	options 4 and 5 have excess (expansion) floor area to be resolved
gym and track	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	13,800	sf	options 3 and 4 have ability to house the larger gym
Total NewCAL	33,000	32,700	41,500	39,800	31,588	36,888	sf	
garage	6,500	10,000	17,300	10,000	-	-	sf	garage was not in the original program
Total Construction	39,500	42,700	58,800	49,800	31,588	36,888	sf	
roof deck	-	1,800	8,400	-	-	-	sf	

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