Chapter 6: Historic and Cultural Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the potential for the proposed Center East project (the Proposed Project) to replace the existing New York Blood Center building (NYBC) to affect historic and cultural resources, which include archaeological and architectural resources. As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the New York Blood Center (the Applicant) is requesting a rezoning and other discretionary actions (the "Proposed Actions") to facilitate the construction of the Proposed Project, an approximately 596,200 gross-square-foot (gsf) through-block building on the site of its existing NYBC building at 310 East 67th Street, Block 1441 Lot 40 (the Development Site) that would contain laboratories and related offices. The building would have a four-story base that would occupy the entire Development Site. It would then set back on all four sides and rise to its full height of 16 stories (approximately 334 feet). The Proposed Actions include a rezoning of the Development Site, the adjacent lot to the west (Block 1441, Lots 1001–1202), and a portion of a lot west of Second Avenue (Block 1421, p/o Lot 21) (see **Figure 6-1**).

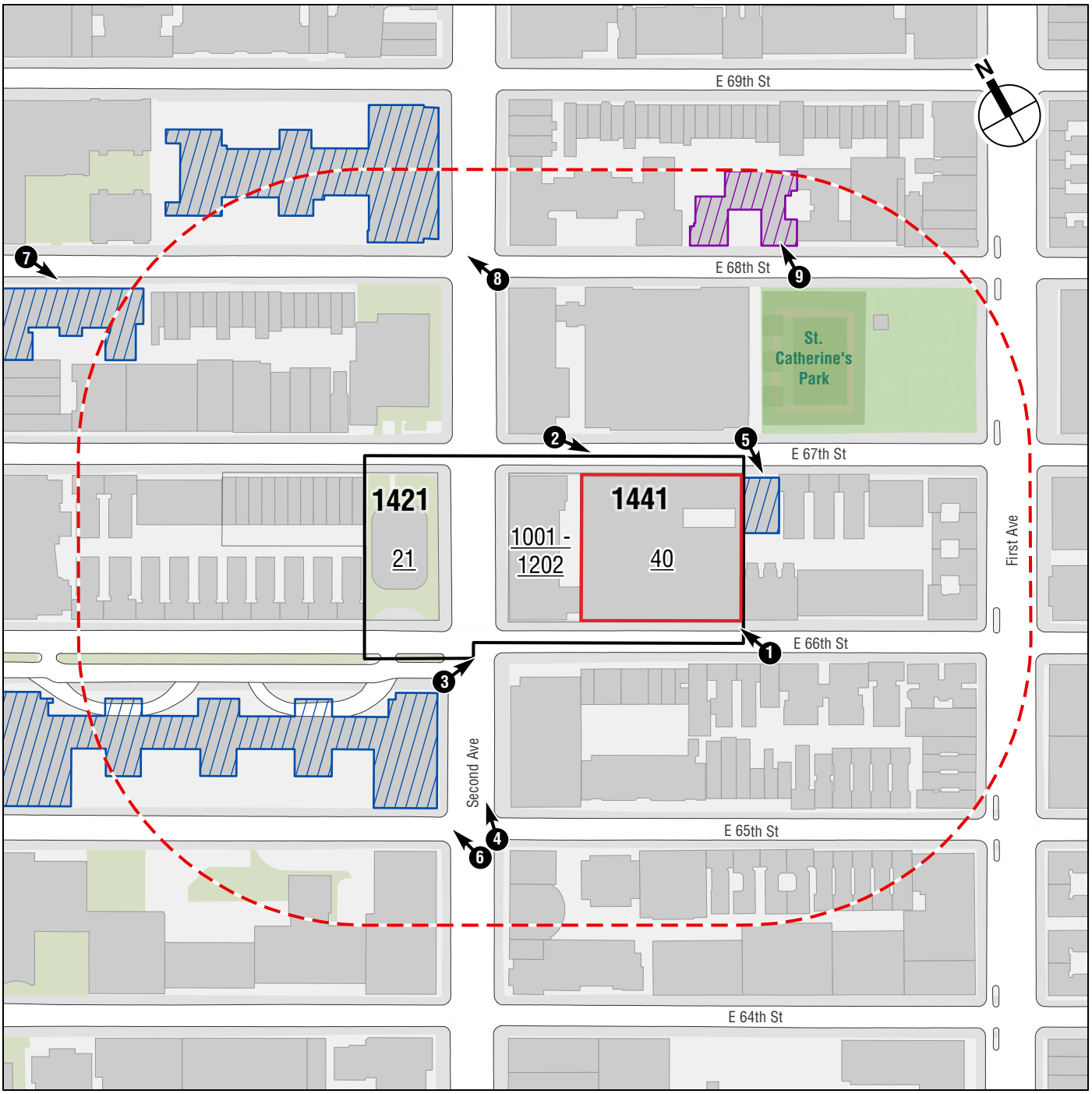
The 2020 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* recommends that an analysis of archaeological resources be undertaken for actions that would result in any in-ground disturbance. It also recommends that an architectural resources assessment be performed if a proposed action would result in any of the following (even if no known architectural resources are located nearby): new construction; physical alteration of any building; change in scale, visual context, or visual setting of any building, structure, object, or landscape feature; or screening or elimination of publicly accessible views. Since the Proposed Actions may result in some of these conditions, a full analysis for archaeological and architectural resources under CEQR was undertaken.

The historic and cultural resources analysis presented below compares the Future without the Proposed Project (the No Action condition) and the Future with the Proposed Project (the With Action condition) on the Development Site, the Rezoning Area, and the surrounding area. Absent the Proposed Actions, in the Future without the Proposed Project (the No Action condition), the as-of-right building would have two five-story wings with frontages on both East 66th and East 67th Streets.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The Proposed Project would not result in any significant adverse impacts to historic or cultural resources. As there are no architectural resources on the Development Site, the Proposed Project would not result in any adverse impacts to architectural resources on the Development Site.

In the study area, no architectural resources would be demolished or altered. Because the Proposed Project would be constructed immediately adjacent to the State and National Register (S/NR)-eligible Library Building at 328 East 67th Street, in comments dated December 14, 2020, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) requested the preparation of a



Historic Resources

NEW YORK BLOOD CENTER—CENTER EAST

Figure 6-1

Construction Protection Plan (CPP). With the preparation and implementation of a CPP for the Library Building, the Proposed Project would not be expected to result in any direct impacts to architectural resources in the study area.

The Proposed Project's potential to result in indirect, or contextual, impacts was also evaluated, and it was determined that the Proposed Project would not result in any visual or contextual impacts on architectural resources in the study area. The Proposed Project also would not obstruct public views of any known or potential architectural resources identified in the study area. Overall, the Proposed Project would not introduce incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements to a historic resource's setting. With the implementation of a CPP for the Library Building, the Proposed Project would not result in any significant adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources in the study area.

B. METHODOLOGY

As noted above, historic and cultural resources include both archaeological and architectural resources. The study area for archeological resources is the Development Site itself where disturbance from excavation and construction can be anticipated. In comments dated July 7, 2020, LPC determined that the Development Site has no archaeological significance (see **Appendix B**). Therefore, this analysis focuses on standing structures only.

Study areas for architectural resources are determined based on the area of potential effect for construction period impacts, as well as the larger area in which there may be visual or contextual impacts. The *CEQR Technical Manual* sets the guidelines for the study area as being typically within an approximately 400-foot radius of the Development Site (see **Figure 6-1**). Within the study area, architectural resources analyzed include S/NR-listed or S/NR–eligible properties, New York City Landmarks (NYCLs), New York City Historic Districts (NYCHDs), and properties pending such designation. In addition, a survey of the study area was conducted to identify any previously undesignated properties that appear to meet S/NR or NYCL eligibility criteria ("potential architectural resources").

Impacts on architectural resources can include both direct physical impacts and indirect impacts. Direct impacts include damage from vibration (i.e., from construction blasting or pile driving) and additional damage from adjacent construction that could occur from falling objects, subsidence, collapse, or damage from construction machinery. Adjacent construction is defined as any construction activity that would occur within 90 feet of an architectural resource, as defined in the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) *Technical Policy and Procedure Notice (TPPN) #10/88*.[1] Chapter 33 of the New York City Building Code outlines measures to ensure protection of adjoining property and includes additional safeguards for historic structures located within 90 feet.

Indirect impacts on architectural resources are contextual or visual impacts that could result from project construction or operation. As described in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, indirect impacts could result from blocking significant public views of a resource; isolating a resource from its setting or relationship to the streetscape; altering the setting of a resource; introducing incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements to a resource's setting; or introducing

[1] *TPPN #10/88* was issued by DOB on June 6, 1988, to supplement Building Code regulations with regard to historic structures. *TPPN #10/88* outlines procedures for the avoidance of damage to historic structures that are listed on the NR or NYCLs resulting from adjacent construction, defined as construction within a lateral distance of 90 feet from the historic resource.

shadows over a historic landscape or an architectural resource with sun-sensitive features that contribute to that resource's significance (e.g., a house of worship with stained-glass windows).

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

DEVELOPMENT SITE AND REZONING AREA

The Development Site contains the NYBC building, a three-story through-block brick-faced building with frontages on both East 66th and East 67th Streets (see Views 1 and 2 of **Figure 6-2**). The building was built circa 1930 as a trade school and has its primary entrance is on East 67th Street. The building has four inner courtyards resulting in small and narrow floor plates. The Applicant has occupied the building with laboratories, office, and van parking since 1964.

In addition to the NYBC building, the Rezoning Area includes two residential buildings. Located immediately adjacent to the Development Site is the 16-story residential building at 301 East 66th Street (see View 3 of **Figure 6-3**). The building was built circa 1956 and occupies the entire blockfront on the East side of Second Avenue with narrow frontages on East 66th and East 67th Streets. The ground floor has commercial uses, and the primary entrance is on East 66th Street. The building's upper floors are faced in glazed white brick and have recessed window bays with balconies. Although the building meets age criteria, it does not appear to meet historic or architectural criteria for S/NR listing or NYCL designation.

The other building in the Rezoning Area is the 45-story residential Solow Tower Apartments at 1261 Second Avenue (see View 4 of **Figure 6-3**). Designed by Gruzen & Partners and built circa 1979, the building occupies the blockfront on the west side of Second Avenue between East 66th and East 67th Streets. The tower is set back from the avenue and streets beyond modest plazas, has a black curtain wall, and a driveway entrance on East 66th Street leading to a below grade parking garage. Although the building meets age criteria, it does not appear to meet historic or architectural criteria for S/NR listing or NYCL designation.

STUDY AREA

Known Architectural Resources

There are four known architectural resources located in the 400-foot study area. These resources are described below and mapped on **Figure 6-1**.

The **67th Street Branch of the New York Public Library** (the "Library Building") (S/NR-eligible) is located immediately adjacent to the Development Site at 328 East 67th Street. The Library Building was designed by the architecture firm Babb, Cook & Willard and built in 1905. It was designed to be similar to the library's Yorkville branch at 222 East 79th Street (S/NR, NYCL). This three-story, three bay Renaissance Revival-style building is faced in limestone and has tall arched window openings with scrolled keystones at the first floor, large rectangular window openings at the second floor, and six smaller rectangular window openings at the third floor. Above the decorative cornice is a balustraded parapet. The façade is inscribed between the second and third floors with "New York Public Library." The Library Building's entrance has an Art Nouveau-style transom above the arched doorway that is flanked by side lights (see View 5 of **Figure 6-4**). In LPC comments issued on December 14, 2020, LPC identifies the Library Building as S/NR-eligible (see **Appendix B**).



View northwest on East 66th Street to the Development Site **1**



View southeast on East 67th Street to the Development Site **2**

Development Site Photos

Figure 6-2



View northeast on Second Avenue to the Rezoning Area building at 301 East 66th Street **3**



View northwest on Second Avenue to the Rezoning Area building at 1261 Second Avenue **4**

Rezoning Area Photos
Figure 6-3

3.29.21





View southeast to the 67th Street Branch of the New York Public Library **5**



View northwest to the Manhattan House at 200 East 66th Street **6**

Study Area – Known Historic Resources

NEW YORK BLOOD CENTER—CENTER EAST

Figure 6-4

Manhattan House at 200 East 66th Street (S/NR-eligible, NYCL) is an apartment complex that occupies a full city block bounded by Second and Third Avenues between East 65th and East 66th Streets. The apartment complex was designed by architects Mayer & Whittlesey with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for the New York Life Insurance Company and built in 1947–1951. This large apartment complex has a modified H-form plan and rises 21 stories. It is clad in glazed white brick and has projecting sections. It contains apartments, an underground parking garage, and ground floor retail. The building is one of the first apartment buildings of its kind in New York City that was designed to create "an indoor-outdoor synthesis" through the use of large windows, projecting balconies, driveways with landscaping, and a block-long garden (see View 6 of **Figure 6-4**).

The 16-story apartment building at **210 East 68th Street** (S/NR) was designed by architects George & Edward Blum and built in 1928. It is one of the earliest Art Deco-style apartment buildings in New York City. The building occupies the southeast corner of East 68th Street and Third Avenue and has prominent frontages on both streets. The building's street facades have decorative polychromatic terra cotta detailing and corbelled brickwork that creates movement across the facades. At the ground floor on East 68th Street, the building is clad in glazed terra cotta panels and a band of geometric terra cotta separating the first and second floors. The primary residential entrance is on East 68th Street and is set within a field of glazed terra cotta panels. The Third Avenue ground floor has been heavily altered and is characterized by commercial businesses. The building's brick-clad upper floors are enhanced with corbelled brickwork and additional terra cotta detailing (see View 7 of **Figure 6-5**).

The large apartment building at **215 East 68th Street/1299 Second Avenue** (S/NR-eligible) was designed by Emery Roth and Sons for the Rudin Management Company and was built in 1959-1962. The apartment complex's short end occupies the blockfront on the west side of Second Avenue, with its massing extending westward where it is set back from the sidewalk lines on East 68th and East 69th Streets by landscapes gardens and entrances to the building's below-grade garages. The building includes a 19-story portion that fronts on Second Avenue, a 32-story middle section, and another 19-story portion that establishes the building's mid-block western end. The building is faced in white brick which was an innovative cladding material at the time of construction and has repetitive fenestration with large window openings (see View 8 of **Figure 6-5**).

Potential Architectural Resources

A survey of the study area was conducted to identify any previously undesignated properties that appear to meet S/NR or NYCL eligibility criteria ("potential architectural resources"). One potential architectural resource was identified.

The nine- and 15-story apartment building at **333 East 68th Street** was built circa 1928. The building architect is unclear. Plans were filed by Van Wart and Wein; however, Cross & Cross have been identified as the "supervising architect" for the building. Advertisements for the building from 1928 and 1929 describe it as being of "Park Avenue quality" but at half the price.[2] The building's 15-story portion rises from the eastern part of the site as a rectangular form and is topped with an octagonal campanile-like tower. The building's lower, nine-story portion is to the west and includes a deeply recessed entrance beyond a garden. The building has rusticated limestone at its base and brick with limestone detailing on its upper floors (see View 9 of **Figure 6-6**).

[2] Christopher Gray, "Beyond the Pale as Well as the Els." *The New York Times, Streetscapes*. May 16, 2013.





View southeast to the apartment building at 210 East 68th Street **7**



View northwest to the apartment building at 215 East 68th Street/ 1299 Second Avenue **8**

Study Area – Known Historic Resources





View northwest to 333 East 68th Street **9**

Study Area – Potential Historic Resource

D. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

DEVELOPMENT SITE AND REZONING AREA

In the No Action condition, it is assumed that the Applicant would demolish the existing NYBC building and replace it with a new building with two five-story wings that would have frontages on both East 66th and East 67th Streets. The wings would share a below grade basement and would have a shared interior courtyard separating the wings. The building's base height would be approximately 60 feet (a maximum roof height of approximately 75 feet) (see Figure 1-8). The No Action building, described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," would contain the Applicant's laboratories and offices as well as medical offices. No development is anticipated in the remainder of the Rezoning Area.

STUDY AREA

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," there are no new development projects in the study area anticipated to be complete by the analysis year.

Construction of the No Action building could cause accidental damage to the Library Building which is located immediately adjacent to the Development Site to the east. However, the 2014 New York City Building Code provides protection measures for all properties against accidental damage from adjacent construction by requiring that all buildings, lots, and service facilities adjacent to foundation and earthwork areas be protected and supported. While these regulations serve to protect all structures adjacent to construction areas, they do not afford special consideration for historic structures.[3] However, since the Library Building, which has been identified as S/NR-eligible by LPC, is located within 90 feet of the Development Site, the Applicant would protect this historic resource during excavation and construction of the No Action building pursuant to DOB's *TPPN #1088*.

In the No Action condition, the status of architectural resources could change. S/NR-eligible properties could be listed on the Registers and potential architectural resources could be determined S/NR-eligible or considered for NYCL designation. However, privately owned properties that are designated NYCLs, are located in New York City Historic Districts, or pending designation as Landmarks are protected under the New York City Landmarks Law, which requires review by LPC and approval before any alteration or demolition can occur, regardless of whether the project is publicly or privately funded. Publicly owned resources are also subject to review by LPC before the start of a project. Resources that are only eligible for Landmark designation, however, are not protected under the Landmarks Law.

Architectural resources that are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places or that have been found eligible for listing are given a measure of protection under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act from the effects of projects sponsored, assisted, or approved by federal agencies. Although preservation is not mandated, federal agencies must attempt to avoid adverse effects on such resources through a notice, review, and consultation process. Properties listed on the Registers are similarly protected against effects resulting from projects sponsored, assisted, or approved by State agencies under the State Historic Preservation Act.

[3] See footnote 1, on page 6-2.

However, private owners of properties eligible for, or even listed on, the Registers using private funds can alter or demolish their properties without such a review process.

E. FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT

DEVELOPMENT SITE AND REZONING AREA

In the With Action condition, as described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," a 16-story, through-block building would be built on the Development Site. The building would have a four-story, approximately 85-foot-tall base that would be built to the sidewalk on both street frontages. A tower would be set back from the base on all sides before rising to the building's full, approximately 334-foot height. As currently planned, it is anticipated that the building's base would be faced with metal panels and glass windows arranged to evoke the texture, rhythm, and scale of nearby residential row houses. The building's East 67th Street façade would include a glass façade for the full extent of the ground floor lobby and interaction spaces. On East 66th Street, the base would include a secondary building entrance, along with three curb cuts that could accommodate three separate vehicular openings for loading docks, waste removal docks, and van parking for NYBC's fleet vehicles). Above the base, the building's façades are anticipated to be clad with a simple palette of translucent and opaque white glass, representing a modern interpretation of the white masonry-clad residential and institutional buildings that are prevalent in the surrounding study area.

The Proposed Project would not result in any significant adverse impacts to historic or cultural resources. As there are no architectural resources on the Development Site, the Proposed Project would not result in any adverse impacts to architectural resources on the Development Site.

STUDY AREA

DIRECT IMPACTS

With the Proposed Project, no architectural resources in the study area would be demolished or altered.

Because the Proposed Project would be constructed immediately adjacent to the S/NR-eligible Library Building at 328 East 67th Street, in comments dated December 14, 2020, LPC requested the preparation of a CPP. As such, the Applicant would prepare a CPP that would include measures to protect the Library Building from inadvertent construction-related damage including ground-borne vibration, falling debris, and accidental damage from heavy machinery during project construction. The CPP would be prepared in consultation with LPC and implemented by a licensed professional engineer prior to the start of excavation and construction activities. The CPP would be prepared as set forth in Section 523 of the *CEQR Technical Manual* and in compliance with the procedures included in the DOB's *TPPN #10/88* and LPC's *Guidelines for Construction Adjacent to a Historic Landmark and Protection Programs for Landmark Buildings*. No other architectural resources in the study area are located within 90 feet of the Development Site.

With the preparation and implementation of a CPP for the Library Building, the Proposed Project would not be expected to result in any direct impacts to architectural resources in the study area.

INDIRECT IMPACTS

The Proposed Actions' potential to result in indirect, or contextual, impacts was also evaluated. Indirect impacts are defined as those impacts that could result from blocking significant public views of a resource; isolating a resource from its setting or relationship to the streetscape; altering the setting of a resource; introducing incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements to a resource's setting; or introducing shadows over a historic landscape or an architectural resource with sun-sensitive features that contribute to that resource's significance, such as a church with notable stained glass windows.

The Proposed Project would not result in any visual or contextual impacts on architectural resources in the study area. As described above, the Library Building is located immediately adjacent to the Development Site. While the Proposed Project would result in a building that is larger and taller than the Library Building, the context of the Library Building would also change in the No Action condition with the introduction of a new five-story building with a glass and metal curtain wall. While the Proposed Project would develop a new building on the Development Site that would be taller than the Library Building, the new building would have a base that is comparable to the height of nearby smaller buildings, including the Library Building. The new building would also have a tower that would be located among other nearby taller buildings, including the two Rezoning Area buildings—the 16-story building immediately west of the Development Site and the 45-story tower across Second Avenue. However, the new building would not be among the tallest buildings in the study area. The Manhattan House, another study area architectural resource, is located approximately 140 feet southwest of the Development Site and does not have a meaningful visual or contextual relationship with the Development Site due to distance and intervening buildings. However, the Proposed Project would be compatible with the 21-story Manhattan House in massing and materials. The other three study area architectural resources—the apartment buildings at 210 East 68th Street, 215 East 68th Street/1299 Second Avenue, and 333 East 68th Street—are located farther from the Development Site and do not have any visual or contextual relationship and therefore, would not be affected by the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project also would not obstruct public views of any known or potential architectural resources identified in the study area. The known and potential architectural resources are primarily separated from the Development Site by intervening streets and/or buildings. The Library Building, the closest architectural resource to the Development Site, faces north towards East 67th Street and is adjacent to the Development Site. The Library Building is a small, three-story building; views to this architectural resource are available only from the immediately surrounding area. Construction of the Proposed Project to the west would not affect any significant public views to this architectural resource or diminish its visual prominence. The Proposed Project would not result in changes to the Library Building to cause it to become a different visual entity, or isolate it from its setting or visual relationships with the streetscape, or otherwise impact the resource's visual prominence. The Manhattan House, as described above, is located approximately 140 feet southwest of the Development Site. Construction of the Proposed Project on a mid-block site northeast of the Manhattan House would not affect any significant public views to the Manhattan House or diminish its visual prominence. The Proposed Project would not result in changes to the Manhattan House to cause it to become a different visual entity, or isolate it from its setting or visual relationships with the streetscape, or otherwise impact the resource's visual prominence.

The Manhattan House, as described above, has large windows, projecting balconies, driveways with landscaping, and a block-long garden—all of which are considered sunlight-sensitive

features. As described in Chapter 5, "Shadows," the Proposed Project would cast new shadows on the north façade of the Manhattan House during two of the four analysis days. However, given the early hour and limited coverage of the incremental shadow, the new shadow cast by the Proposed Project would not be significant. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse project-generated shadow impacts on any sunlight-sensitive historic resources in the historic and cultural resources study area.

In the With Action condition, the proposed building would be clad in materials compatible with both the older and newer buildings in the study area and that complement the variety of façade materials of a number of the architectural resources in the study area. As described above, the architectural resources in the study area exist in a mixed context of newer and older buildings, including the three-story, stone-faced Renaissance Revival-style Library Building with large window openings and the large 21-story brick-faced modern Manhattan House with its articulated façade of brick and projecting balconies. Therefore, the contemporary design for the new building with the Proposed Project would not adversely impact the setting of architectural resources in the study area.

Overall, the Proposed Project would not introduce incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements to a historic resource's setting. With the implementation of a CPP for the Library Building, the Proposed Project would not result in any significant adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources in the study area.

REFERENCES

Gray, Christopher. "Beyond the Pale as Well as the Els." *The New York Times, Streetscapes*. May 16, 2013. ✷