Chapter 8: Historic and Cultural Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential of the proposed 15 Penn Plaza project to affect historic and cultural resources. The development site contains the Hotel Pennsylvania located at 401 Seventh Avenue between West 32nd and 33rd Streets, across Seventh Avenue from Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan (Block 808, Lots 1001 and 1002). Absent the proposed actions, the Hotel Pennsylvania will be demolished and the development site will be redeveloped as-of-right with an approximately 580-foot-tall, 34-story office building (the No Action building). The proposed project would also result in the redevelopment of the development site with a new commercial office building (either the Single-Tenant Office Scenario or the Multi-Tenant Office Scenario). Both development scenarios would also include improvements to the subway entrances on West 32nd and West 33rd Streets and the reopening, widening, and renovation of the former pedestrian passageway under the south side of West 33rd Street. This chapter compares the potential of the proposed project to impact historic and cultural resources in the future without the proposed project (the "No Action" condition).

Historic and cultural resources include both archaeological and architectural resources.

The study area for archaeological resources would be the area disturbed for project construction, the development site itself. The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) was contacted for a preliminary assessment of the development site's archaeological sensitivity. In comments dated August 21, 2008, LPC determined that they have no archaeological concerns for the development site (see Appendix B). Therefore, this analysis focuses on standing structures only.

In general, potential impacts to architectural resources can include both direct physical impacts and indirect, contextual impacts. Direct impacts include demolition of a resource and alterations to a resource that cause it to become a different visual entity. A resource could also be damaged 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]

Contextual impacts can include the isolation of a property from its surrounding environment, or the introduction of visual, audible, or atmospheric elements that are out of character with a property or that alter its setting. The study area for architectural resources is, therefore, larger

[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 resulting from adjacent construction, defined as construction within a lateral distance of 90 feet from the historic resource.

than the archaeological study area to account for any potential impacts that may occur where proposed construction activities could physically alter architectural resources or be close enough to them to potentially cause physical damage or visual or contextual impacts.

Following the guidelines of the *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual,* the primary architectural resources study area for this project is defined as being within an approximately 400-foot radius of the development site (see **Figure 8-1**). A larger study area was also included, which includes the Empire State Building, an architectural resource located on West 34th Street north and east of the development site. Since the DEIS, the larger study area was clarified, and a secondary study area was delineated that extends east-west on the 34th Street corridor between the East and Hudson Rivers. Architectural resources that are approximately 1,000 feet in height, the approximate height of the proposed building on the development site, were analyzed. In addition, more distant views to the Empire State Building from vantage points in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx were also considered.

Within the study areas, architectural resources that were analyzed include National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), properties listed on the State and/or National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR) or properties determined eligible for such listing (S/NR-eligible), New York City Landmarks (NYCLs) and Historic Districts, and properties determined eligible for landmark status ("Known Architectural Resources"). Additionally, a survey was conducted to identify any previously undesignated properties that appear to meet S/NR or NYCL eligibility criteria ("Potential Architectural Resources").

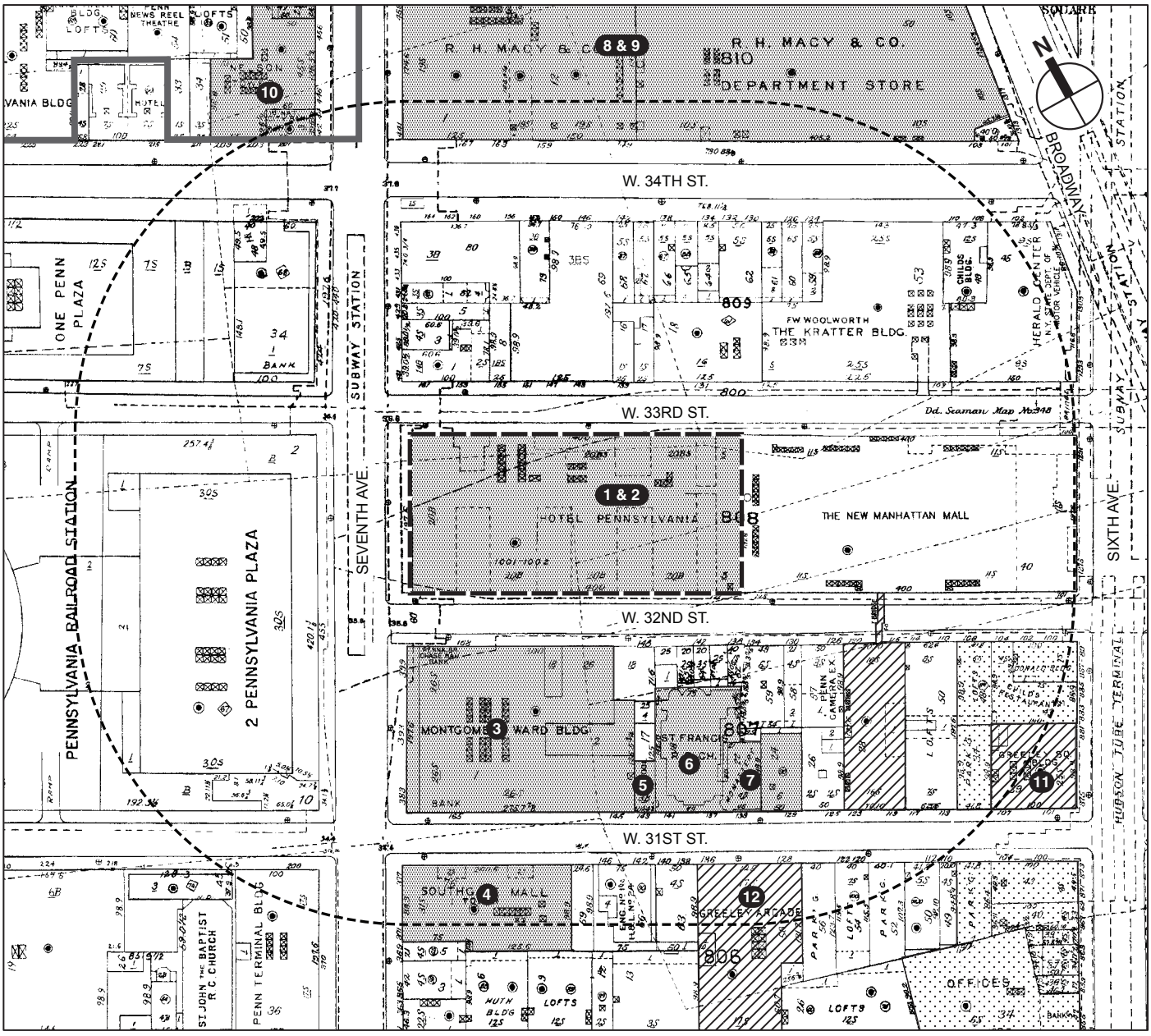
As detailed in this chapter, the proposed project (either scenario) would not result in significant adverse impacts on historic and cultural resources.

B. BACKGROUND HISTORY[1]

By the mid-19th century, the farmland that had once characterized the area of Manhattan surrounding the development site had been developed as a primarily residential district of four- and five-story tenement buildings with shops at the street level for the working classes, and three- and four-story, single-family rowhouses for the middle class. Other buildings in the area by that time included a school and several stables buildings located among the residential buildings. Industrial buildings were generally located west of Seventh Avenue and included a brewery and other small manufacturing buildings. After the Civil War and until the early 20th century, this area changed from a mostly residential area to one having a broader mix of building types and uses, including theaters, hotels, restaurants, and shops, with theaters and hotels locating along or near Sixth Avenue, Broadway, and West 34th Street.

In 1902, the Pennsylvania Railroad began construction of the original Pennsylvania Station designed by McKim, Mead & White. The following year, plans were announced for the construction of a new Grand Central Terminal on 42nd Street at Park Avenue. These major transportation developments (even before their completion) made the "Pennsylvania Zone" ("Penn Zone") attractive to retailers and manufacturers who sought easy transport of materials and access to out-of-town shoppers, wholesale buyers, and commuters. By this time, the Sixth Avenue elevated train also extended through the area. The original Pennsylvania Station was

[1] Information summarized from the draft historic resources document prepared by Building Conservation Associates in connection with the proposed 2008 Expanded Moynihan/Penn Station Redevelopment Project. The project was halted and the environmental review was never published.



Historic Resources
Figure 8-1

completed in 1910 and occupied the large block bounded by Seventh and Eighth Avenues between West 31st and West 33rd Streets. Also in 1910, the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad (now the Port Authority Trans Hudson [PATH] train) constructed a passenger tunnel under the Hudson River connecting New Jersey to the new Pennsylvania Station, further enhancing access to this area. The General Post Office, also designed by McKim, Mead & White, was built between 1910 and 1913 on the eastern portion of the block west of the original Pennsylvania Station on the west side of Eighth Avenue. It was designed to use the Pennsylvania Station tracks below for postal operations.

In addition to these large-scale transportation developments, by 1910, larger and taller factory lofts were being built on the east-west streets near Pennsylvania Station in the Penn Zone, replacing many of the smaller residential tenements and rowhouses that had previously characterized much of this area. Hotels and theaters were being built along Seventh Avenue and Broadway, and elegant shops on West 34th Street near Herald Square. By 1911, large 10- to 12-story department stores had been built in the area with frontages on Sixth Avenue, including the eastern portion of Macy's, Gimbel Brothers, and Saks and Company. Taller loft buildings had also been built that ranged in height from five to 16 stories, including the 16-story Cuyler Building, built in 1911-1912 at 119-123 West 31st Street/116-120 West 32nd Street.

In 1917, a segment of the Seventh Avenue subway line was opened between Times Square and West 34th Street, and by 1919, as described in more detail below, the 22-story Hotel Pennsylvania was completed. This large hotel occupies the western portion of the block between West 32nd and West 33rd Streets, with its primary frontage on Seventh Avenue. The hotel shared the block with the 10-story Gimbel Brothers Department Store building (now the Manhattan Mall, described below). By the early 1920s, the Penn Zone was well established as a thriving business district. The economic boom of the 1920s further contributed to the rapid rate of construction of new, larger hotels, lofts, and office buildings. Existing buildings that date from this development period include the 26-story former Equitable Life Assurance Company Building (1922-1923) at 383-399 Seventh Avenue, the 25-story Greeley Square Building (1926) at 101-107 West 31st Street, the 17-story Greeley Arcade Building (1926) at 128-136 West 31st Street/127-133 West 30th Street, and the 31-story former Governor Clinton Hotel (1929) at 371-377 Seventh Avenue. The Garment and Fur Districts, north and south of the Penn Zone, respectively, were established around this time and are characterized by loft buildings designed and constructed specifically for these industries.

Development changes in the area surrounding the Hotel Pennsylvania have also included the construction, in 1953, of a through-block 25-story commercial building on West 34th Street. In 1963, the original Pennsylvania Station was demolished, and the site was redeveloped with the current train station and Madison Square Garden. The block northwest of the hotel was also greatly altered with the demolition of the older, mostly smaller three- to five-story residential buildings on the west side of Seventh Avenue between West 33rd and West 34th Streets. This block was redeveloped in 1968 with the 30-story 2 Penn Plaza Building and in 1972 the 57-story 1 Penn Plaza Building. In the 1980s, the Gimbel Brothers building was significantly altered to create the Manhattan Mall, with the removal of its original masonry cladding and the addition of a primarily glass and metal curtain wall.

Other more recent changes to the area near the Hotel Pennsylvania have included the construction of two new hotels on West 31st Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. Three older buildings on West 31st and West 32nd Streets have also been demolished and are now being redeveloped.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITE

KNOWN ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

The **Hotel Pennsylvania** is located at 401 Seventh Avenue between West 32nd and 33rd Streets. In an October 30, 2003 letter, as part of the environmental review for the *No. 7 Extension—Hudson Yards Rezoning and Development Program Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement* (2004), the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) determined that the Hotel Pennsylvania meets eligibility criteria for listing on the S/NR (see Appendix B). As part of the same environmental review, LPC determined that the Hotel Pennsylvania appears eligible for designation as an NYCL (NYCL-eligible) (see Appendix B). However, in 2007 and 2008, in a response to letters and supporting materials submitted to LPC by members of the public requesting an evaluation of the eligibility of the Hotel Pennsylvania for designation as an NYCL, LPC made the following finding: "In response to the information you submitted concerning the property referenced above [the Hotel Pennsylvania], a senior staff committee of the Landmarks Preservation Commission has reviewed the property for consideration as a potential landmark. At this time, the property does not appear to meet the criteria for designation and will not be recommended to the full Commission for further consideration as a New York City landmark" (see Appendix B).

The Hotel Pennsylvania was designed by the architecture firm of **McKim, Mead & White** and completed in 1919. It is a 22-story brick-and-stone hotel with Classical Revival details. It is designed with a rusticated base with an Ionic entrance portico along its Seventh Avenue entrance and a loggia of ionic pilasters (see Photographs 1 and 2 of **Figure 8-2**). The hotel was built to cater primarily to travelers using the original Pennsylvania Station (1910), now demolished, which was also designed by McKim, Mead & White and formerly located in the current location of the Pennsylvania Station and Madison Square Garden complex across Seventh Avenue. The hotel was designed to complement the train station and the General Post Office (1913), also designed by McKim, Mead & White, located along the west side of Eighth Avenue west of the original Pennsylvania Station. The Pennsylvania Railroad company built the hotel partially out of concern that it would lose passengers to the New York Central Railroad, which was building the Commodore Hotel for a similar clientele near Grand Central Terminal. The Hotel Pennsylvania was also designed to meet a newly emerging need for businessmen's hotels and was built to accommodate large conventions of professional societies and business organizations. The hotel's lobby, once one of the most important decorative spaces in the hotel, was modeled after the peristyle court in a house of the late Roman Republic, and its ornamental glass ceiling was designed by the firm of G. Rae & Co. Other original interior spaces included ballrooms and banquet rooms; a main restaurant, private dining rooms, a tea room, a bar, and a men's cafe; and a library.

Since the hotel's construction in 1919, the building's exterior and interior spaces have undergone several major alterations. Four of the building's six Ionic portico columns at the Seventh Avenue entrance have been cut off at mid-height to accommodate a new marquee and an expanded entryway. Windows on the building's first three floors have been altered and expanded into doorways or replaced to accommodate a variety of retail establishments, many of which have awnings and miscellaneous signage. Windows on the building's upper floors have been replaced with modern aluminum windows of several different types. Various types of



Hotel Pennsylvania - 401 Seventh Avenue **1**



Hotel Pennsylvania - 401 Seventh Avenue **2**

Historic Resources
Project Site
Figure 8-2

signage have been installed on the building's façades. A penthouse structure has been added to the roof, which breaks the copper cornice line and adds approximately a half floor in height. Most, if not all, of the hotel's original public rooms, described above, no longer exist, as many have been converted to commercial retail space. The hotel lobby's original ornamental glass ceiling has been removed, although the lobby's terrazzo tile floors remain. The hotel's ballrooms have also been converted for use as television studios.

As described in more detail in "Background History," the context of the Hotel Pennsylvania has been altered since the hotel's construction in 1919. Most of the three- to six-story rowhouses and tenement buildings have since been demolished. Several larger, taller office and commercial buildings now in the area surrounding the hotel were developed on the sites of these older, smaller buildings. The 1963 demolition of the original Pennsylvania Station and the redevelopment of the site with the current train station and Madison Square Garden changed the hotel's context and relationship to that site. The block northwest of the hotel across Seventh Avenue was also extensively altered when the small rowhouses that previously occupied the block were demolished and the block was redeveloped in 1968 with the 30-story, concrete and glass 2 Penn Plaza Building, and in 1972 with the 57-story, steel and glass 1 Penn Plaza Building. Extensive alterations in the 1980s to the former Gimbel Brothers Department Store (now the Manhattan Mall) immediately east of the hotel further changed the context of the area surrounding the hotel. Over time, these changes to the area have created a context defined by the juxtaposition of older and newer buildings with a wide range of heights, including the taller architectural resources such as the 31-story former Governor Clinton Hotel at 371-377 Seventh Avenue and the 25-story Greeley Square Building at 101-107 West 31st Street, described below.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

KNOWN ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

The 26-story former **Equitable Life Assurance Company Building** (S/NR-eligible, NYCL-eligible), at 383-399 Seventh Avenue between West 31st and 32nd Streets, is located approximately 60 feet south of the development site, across West 32nd Street. This Renaissance Revival-style building, designed by Starrett & Van Vleck and constructed in 1922-1923, was built to house the company's headquarters, which had been relocated from 120 Broadway in the Financial District (see Photograph 3 of **Figure 8-3**). The new building site was less expensive than land downtown and, at that time, was located across the street from both Pennsylvania Station and the Hotel Pennsylvania.

The building has a 15-story base and a series of three setbacks that create penthouse floors. Clad in stone, the first three floors have large display windows, panels carved with foliate designs, cartouches, and a balustraded cornice. On the ground floor, some of the storefront spandrel panels have been replaced. The center of the Seventh Avenue façade has a stone entrance arch with decorative spandrels and a cornice. The main mass of the brick building is simply articulated with piers and evenly spaced, paired rectangular windows. A stone cornice with corner lanterns caps the 15th story. Above this, the building sets back with a penthouse with large, arched double-windows and a corbelled arched cornice. At the corners at the top of the building are large stone lanterns.

Located at 371-377 Seventh Avenue, the former **Governor Clinton Hotel** (S/NR-eligible, NYCL-eligible) is a 31-story building faced in tan brick and limestone with Italianate and Romanesque details (see Photograph 4 of **Figure 8-3**). Designed by Murgatroyd and Ogden in



Former Equitable Life Assurance Company Building - 383-399 Seventh Avenue **3**



Former Governor Clinton Hotel - 371-377 Seventh Avenue **4**

Historic Resources
Study Area
Figure 8-3

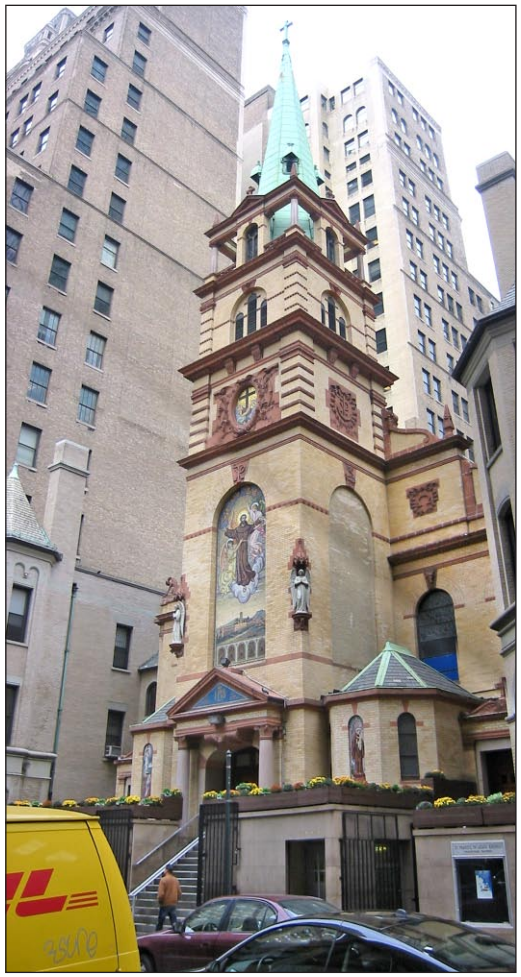
association with George B. Post and built in 1929, the building was the first hotel built in the vicinity of Pennsylvania Station after the construction 10 years earlier of the Hotel Pennsylvania (discussed above). Set on a three-story limestone base, the asymmetrically massed building rises without setbacks from the avenue for most of its height. The building's West 31st Street façade has deep exterior light courts above the base. Above the 19th floor, the building is massed with a series of setbacks creating several penthouse levels flanked by corner pavilions. The Italianate/Romanesque decorative detailing includes large, round-arched windows with ogee-arched archivolts on the second floor and the setback stories; patterns of protruding brick headers on the shaft of the building; arched corbelled brick cornices located at the base and at each setback; and squared brick canopies with diaper patterning set above the third floor corner windows.

Built in phases between 1891 and 1912, the **St. Francis Roman Catholic Church Complex** (S/NR-eligible, NYCL-eligible) at 129-143 West 31st Street replaced an earlier church on the same site dating from the late 1840s. The present Renaissance Revival style church was designed by Henry Ehrhardt and built in 1891-1892 (see Photograph 5 of **Figure 8-4**). The church, faced in yellow brick with stone trim, is set above the street on a plinth. A pedimented temple front porch marks the entrance; stone columns support the brick and stone entablature and the stone pediment that contains a mosaic tympanum. Above the pediment is a recessed arched mosaic of St. Francis. The upper portion of the tower is ornately decorated with stone courses, a bracketed cornice, and a molded frame for a mosaic roundel. Crowning the tower is a spire surrounded by a partially detached entablature supported on freestanding corner columns. The five-story brick Franciscan Fathers monastery, located east of the church, was designed by Thomas J. Duff in a subdued Renaissance Revival style and was built in 1908-1909 (see Photograph 6 of **Figure 8-4**). The monastery has two distinct façades: the primary street façade and a façade facing the forecourt of the church. A stone cornice extending above the first floor and arched windows on the same floor unite the two façades. The street façade is raised above a rusticated stone basement. The central section of the façade has three bays and a round-arched entrance flanking round-arched windows, round-arched windows on the upper floors, and a stone gable with a carved quatrefoil. A recessed side bay is located next to the building adjacent to the east. An angled corner pavilion with a peaked roof transitions the street façade to the simply designed forecourt façade. Thomas J. Duff also designed the three-story School of St. Francis of Assisi west of the church. Built in 1911-1912, it mirrors the monastery with an angled corner tower (see Photograph 7 of **Figure 8-4**). There are later, non-contributing additions to the complex at 129 West 31st Street and to the rear of the church on West 32nd Street. The contributing buildings within the church complex are approximately 115 feet south of the development site.

The **R. H. Macy and Company Store** (NHL, S/NR, NYCL-eligible) occupies the full block bounded by Broadway, Seventh Avenue, and West 34th and 35th Streets (excluding two small buildings on the northwest and southeast corners of the block) (see Photographs 8 and 9 of **Figure 8-5**). In 1858, Rowland H. Macy founded a small dry goods store on Sixth Avenue near West 14th Street. By 1902, when the business moved to its current location, it had become a "department store," offering a wide variety of goods. The Macy's building was the first large store to locate north of 23rd Street. It was constructed in five phases. The Broadway Building, designed by DeLemos & Cordes, dates from 1901-1902. An additional story was added to this section in 1910. Successive additions were made to the west, eventually occupying the remainder of the block, in 1922-1924, 1928, and 1931, all designed by Robert D. Kohn. The 1902/1910 section of the building occupies the block's entire Broadway frontage and



School of St. Francis of Assisi - 143 West 31st Street **5**



St. Francis Roman Catholic Church 137-141 West 31st Street **6**



Franciscan Fathers Monastery - 133-135 West 31st Street **7**

Historic Resources
Study Area
Figure 8-4



R.H. Macy and Company Store - West 34th Street and Broadway Facades **8**



R.H. Macy and Company Store -
Seventh Avenue and West 34th Street Facades **9**

Historic Resources
Study Area
Figure 8-5

approximately 60 percent of the West 34th Street frontage between Broadway and Seventh Avenue.

Architecturally, the eastern Broadway Building is the most elaborate and ornamental portion of the complex, with English Palladian design details, including the four-story pilasters on the Broadway façade, the pedimented windows at the corners, the arcaded top story, and the crowning balustrade. Apart from its greater level of detail, this part of the building complex is the most significant in terms of the development of the department store type. The later western parts of the building have a more modest design and respond to the setback requirements of the zoning law. Stylistically, these sections are typical of the stripped classicism often found in commercial and department store architecture of the period. The components of the building complex have a gray concrete and stone base, with red and gray brick and stone on the upper floors. Stone cornices mark the transitions of wall materials. The West 35th Street façade is the building's rear façade, with loading docks along the street and venting louvers in many of the windows.

A small portion of the **Garment Center Historic District** (S/NR Historic District) on the north side of West 34th Street is included in the study area.[1] The 45-story **Nelson Tower** (NYCL-eligible), a contributing building within the Garment Center Historic District, is located two blocks north of Pennsylvania Station and within the Garment Center Historic District. This building at 203-209 West 34th Street/446-456 Seventh Avenue originally housed showroom and office space for businesses in the garment trade. Designed by H. Craig Severance, the Nelson Tower was the tallest building in the Garment District when it was completed in 1931. The façades are ornamented with Art Deco bas-relief. The most distinctive architectural feature of the building is its massing; above the tall base, the building rises, from all façades, in a series of setbacks to a tall, slender central tower (see Photograph 10 of **Figure 8-6**). The setbacks are emphasized by terra cotta detailing that contrasts with the darker brick facade. Colored spandrel panels, brick piers, and bold parapets contribute to the perception of verticality.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

As stated above, a larger secondary study area was delineated that extends east-west on the 34th Street corridor between the East and Hudson Rivers, and the proposed project's potential effects on architectural resources that are approximately 1,000 feet in height, the approximate height of the proposed building on the development site, were analyzed further.

The **Empire State Building**[2] (NHL, S/NR, NYCL—exterior and interior designation) is a prominent architectural resource in Midtown Manhattan. Located at 350 Fifth Avenue, approximately 1,000 feet north and east of the development site, the Empire State Building was designed by Shreve, Lamb & Harmon and constructed in 1930-1931. It occupies the eastern portion of the block bounded by Fifth and Sixth Avenues, and West 33rd and West 34th Streets and has its primary entrance on Fifth Avenue. The Empire State Building is the tallest and one of the most recognizable buildings in New York City. The 102-story building with a 14-story

[1] The Garment Center Historic District is roughly bounded by Sixth and Ninth Avenues and West 34th and 41st Streets.

[2] Information in this section is summarized from the LPC designation report: *Empire State Building, 350 Fifth Avenue, Borough of Manhattan. Built 1930-31; Architects Shreve, Lamb & Harmon*. Landmarks Preservation Commission, May 19, 1981, Designation List 143, LP-2000.



Nelson Tower - 203-209 West 34th Street/446-456 Seventh Avenue **10**

Historic Resources
Study Area
Figure 8-6

mooring mast is approximately 1,250 feet tall. The overall building height, including its pinnacle with broadcast antennas and a lightning rod, reaches 1,453 feet tall. The building is faced in Indiana limestone and has predominately glass storefronts at its ground floor. The building has a five-story base, a series of setbacks above the base, and a slender 81-story tower. At the 86th floor is an observation deck. Above the 86th floor is the building's 14-story aluminum, chrome, steel, and glass mast. The building's massing and form reflect the zoning laws in place at the time of the building's construction.

As described in the 1981 LPC designation report, the Empire State Building was the final—and most celebrated—building constructed in Midtown as part of the 1920s economic boom. This construction boom resulted in the addition of numerous modern skyscrapers that transformed the Midtown skyline at that time. The construction of the Empire State Building on the former site of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel also marked a turning point in the character of Midtown by transforming it from a preeminent residential area into a commercial center characterized by new, tall buildings. Despite these changes in construction trends in Midtown, the Great Depression and World War II largely halted most development, including the construction of other tall buildings in New York City. Extensive new construction in New York City did not begin again until the post-World War II period. By that time, construction trends had changed and new development typically resulted in shorter office buildings with larger floor plates. Further, much of the post-World War II new construction occurred farther north in Midtown, and some occurred in the Financial District in Lower Manhattan. As a result, the Empire State Building's visual context and prominence in the skyline was preserved by the lack of development in its vicinity.

These development trends have contributed to the Empire State Building's long-standing status as the tallest building in New York City. However, the larger context of the Empire State Building has changed since the building was constructed, as newer and often tall buildings have been built throughout Manhattan especially during the boom periods of the 1960s and 1980s. Overall, the large number of new high rise structures has altered the prominence of the Empire State Building from nearby vantage points, as well as more distant views, that increasingly include tall buildings. In addition, publicly accessible views of the Empire State Building have changed through time as views from waterfront parks along the East and Hudson Rivers are now available from areas that have historically been working waterfronts or inaccessible to the public.

As noted above, existing views to the Empire State Building are varied. From vantage points near 33rd and 34th Streets and Fifth Avenue, views of the building are limited due to its height and massing, while from somewhat farther away on these nearby streets views are more comprehensive and include portions of the base and tower. Longer views on 34th Street generally include more of the tower portion of the building, as the lower floors are obstructed or obscured by distance and intervening buildings.

The most iconic views of the Empire State Building, however, are from longer distances, including views from Brooklyn, Queens, and some areas of the Bronx; these views provide a contextual view of the Empire State Building as one of many tall buildings in the skyline including, among others, the Chrysler Building, an architectural resource, and newer buildings in Midtown, including the 90-story Trump World Tower on First Avenue and East 48th Street.

No other architectural resources that are more than 1,000 feet tall are located in the secondary study area.

Other tall architectural resources located closest to the development site include the 77-story (1,050-foot-tall, including its spire) Chrysler Building at 405 Lexington Avenue located approximately 4,117 feet (0.75 miles) northeast of the development site and the 70-story (872-foot-tall) GE Building at 30 Rockefeller Plaza located approximately 4,263 feet (0.81 miles) northeast of the development site.

POTENTIAL ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

The 25-story **Greeley Square Building**, located at 101-107 West 31st Street, occupies the northwest corner of West 31st Street and Sixth Avenue. It is an office and showroom building designed by architects Gronenberg & Leuchtag and built in 1926 (see Photograph 11 of **Figure 8-7**). The building's four-story base is faced in gray limestone and terra cotta, with windows grouped across the façades. Above the base, the building is faced in orange brick and has a more modest design until the 16th floor, where a series of setbacks begin that are accented by arches and decorative terra cotta.

The **Greeley Arcade Building**, located at 128-136 West 31st Street/127-133 West 30th Street, is a 17-story through-block building designed by architects George and Edward Blum and completed in 1926. It originally housed offices and showrooms and has a ground-floor arcade extending from West 30th to 31st Streets (see Photograph 12 of **Figure 8-7**). The building's three-story base is faced in limestone and has six bays defined by articulated detailing around the window groupings. Above the base, the building is faced in tan brick with few decorative elements. Starting at the ninth floor, the building has a series of setbacks, the tops of which are emphasized by running arches and capitals.

The 16-story **Cuyler Building**, located at 119-123 West 31st Street/116-120 West 32nd Street, was designed by architect William H. Gompert and built in 1911-1912 as a loft and commercial building. At the time of its construction, it was described in *The New York Times* as "the finest improvement yet contemplated for that block, not including the Gimbel building on the Sixth Avenue corner."[1] This through-block building's north and south façades have a similar design; the facades are divided into three bays, with groupings of three windows per bay (see Photographs 13 and 14 of **Figure 8-8**). In 1925, the Gimbels company bought the Cuyler Building, located directly south of the Gimbel Brothers store, to allow the company to continue to grow by relocating certain non-selling departments from the store to the loft building. A three-level copper skybridge, designed by architects Shreve and Lamb (who also designed the Empire State Building), spans West 32nd Street between the Cuyler Building and the former Gimbel Brothers department store to the north. A painted "Gimbels" sign is still visible on the west façade of the building.

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

NO ACTION BUILDING

Absent the proposed actions, the project sponsor will demolish the Hotel Pennsylvania and redevelop the development site with an as-of-right, approximately 580-foot-tall, 34-story office building with ground floor retail and accessory, below-grade parking. The building's ground-floor retail will have street frontages on West 32nd Street, Seventh Avenue, and West 33rd

[1] *The New York Times*. "New Era of Prosperity Dawning for Sixth Avenue." June 4, 1911.



Greeley Square Building **11**
- 101-107 West 31st Street

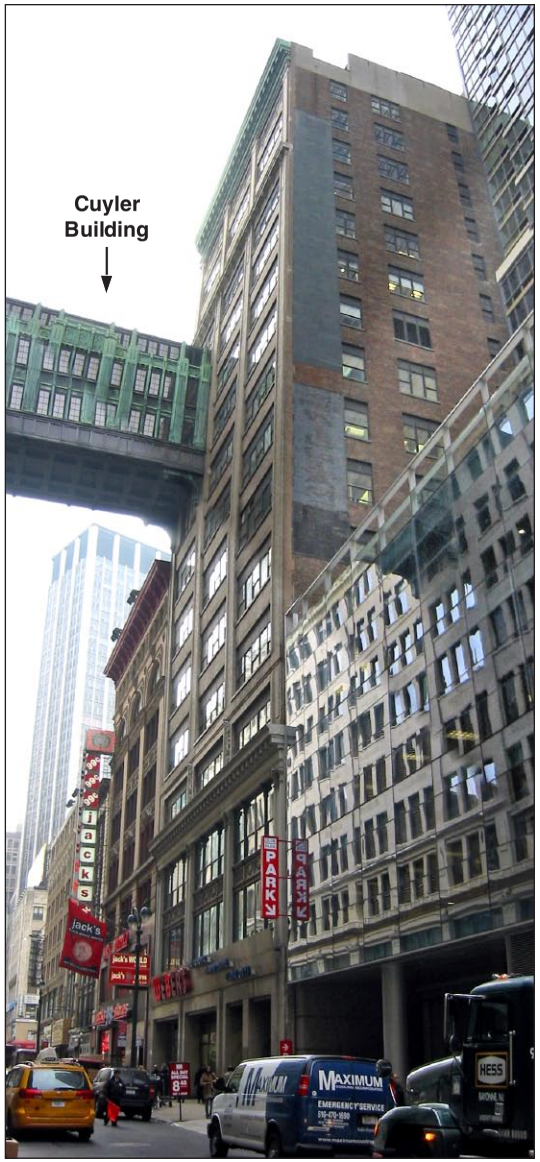


Greeley Arcade Building **12**
- 128-136 West 31st Street/127-133 West 30th Street

Historic Resources
Study Area
Figure 8-7



Cuyler Building **13**
-119 West 31st Street Facade



Cuyler Building **14**
-116-120 West 32nd Street Facade

Historic Resources
Study Area
Figure 8-8

Street, and the building's main entrance will be on Seventh Avenue. The building's approximately 85-foot-tall base will have four floors, with large floorplates occupying the entire development site and containing ground-floor retail and offices. A slab-like tower will rise from the middle of the building's base and will be set back from all sides of the base.

The demolition of the 22-story, brick- and stone-clad Hotel Pennsylvania will remove an S/NR-eligible resource from the development site. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Level II documentation will be undertaken by the project sponsor prior to the hotel's demolition to record the history and appearance of the Hotel Pennsylvania. The HABS documentation will be submitted to an appropriate public repository.

The redevelopment of the development site with a 34-story building with a glass curtain wall will alter the context of some of the nearby architectural resources, particularly those closest to the development site, including the 26-story Equitable Life Assurance Company Building at 383-399 Seventh Avenue and the St. Francis Roman Catholic Church Complex at 129-143 West 31st Street. However, as described above, these buildings are already located in the context of an area that has been extensively altered since these buildings were first built. Therefore, the No Action building will not block views to architectural resources that are not already obstructed by intervening buildings which limit the visual and contextual relationships among buildings in the study area. Some views to the No Action building will be available in views south on Seventh Avenue from the southern area of the Garment Center Historic District. However, due to the mixed context of the area and lack of a significant historical relationship between the Garment Center Historic District and the development site, these changes would not be considered adverse.

The S/NR-eligible former Equitable Life Assurance Company Building, described above, is located within 90 feet of the development site and could potentially be adversely impacted by ground-borne vibrations or other potential construction-related activities. The New York City Building Code provides some measures of protection 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.

OTHER FUTURE PROJECTS

In the No Action condition, a 48-story (approximately 554-foot-tall) residential building with approximately 338 residential dwelling units, offices, and retail at 885 Sixth Avenue is expected to be complete in 2010. Just outside the primary study area to the southeast, at 835 Sixth Avenue between West 30th and West 31st Streets, is a site under construction with a 53-story (approximately 613-foot-tall) steel and glass curtain wall-faced building to be complete in 2010. Just outside the secondary study area is a development that is expected to be completed by 2014. Hudson Yards Site 32/33 (the development known as "Manhattan West") will be constructed at the southwest corner of West 33rd Street and Ninth Avenue. It will be built over the railyards west of the Farley Post Office and will have two towers, one rising 66 stories (approximately 1,216 feet tall) and the other 60 stories (approximately 935 feet tall). In addition, a 22-story (approximately 229-foot-tall) Cambria Suites Hotel will be constructed on West 33rd Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues in the No Action condition.

The status of architectural resources could change in the No Action condition. S/NR-eligible architectural resources could be listed on the S/NR, NYCL-eligible properties could be

calendared for a designation hearing, and properties pending designation as NYCLs could be designated. It is possible that some architectural resources in the study area could deteriorate, while others could be restored. In addition, future projects could affect the settings of architectural resources, or accidentally damage such resources through adjacent construction.

Changes to the architectural resources identified above or to their settings could occur irrespective of the proposed actions. Future projects could also affect the settings of architectural resources. It is possible that some architectural resources in the study areas could deteriorate, while others could be restored. In addition, future projects could accidentally damage architectural resources through adjacent construction.

Historic and cultural resources that are listed on the S/NR 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. S/NR-listed properties are similarly protected against effects resulting from projects sponsored, assisted, or approved by State agencies under the State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA). 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. Privately owned properties that are NYCLs, in New York City Historic Districts, or pending designation as NYCLs are protected under the New York City Landmarks Law, which requires LPC review and approval before any alteration or demolition permits can be issued, 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. However, LPC's role in projects sponsored by other City or state agencies generally is advisory only.

As described above, the New York City Building Code provides some measures of protection for all properties against accidental damage from adjacent construction. However, these regulations do not afford special consideration for historic structures.

E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

PROJECT SITE

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," both the Single-Tenant Office Scenario and Multi-Tenant Office Scenario would result in a new, tall commercial office building located above a podium base suitable for trading uses. Both scenarios would also involve below-grade mass transit improvements that would relocate and upgrade the existing subway entrances on West 32nd and 33rd Streets, and reopen, widen, and renovate the former pedestrian passageway under the south side of West 33rd Street. Both development scenarios would also improve several subway stairways and control areas serving the Seventh Avenue line, the Sixth Avenue line, the Broadway line, and PATH. These changes would not affect architectural resources.

As with the No Action condition, the proposed project would result in the demolition of the Hotel Pennsylvania and the redevelopment of the development site with a new, taller building with steel and glass curtain walls and ground-floor retail. With the Single-Tenant Office Scenario, the development site would be redeveloped with a 61-story, approximately 1,060-foot-tall commercial office building (including three floors of rooftop mechanicals), with its tower portion oriented along Seventh Avenue and an approximately 228-foot-tall, 10-story base

occupying the mid-block portion of the development site east of the tower. The Single-Tenant Office Scenario building would fully occupy the development site. It would be set back approximately 10 feet from the north and south property lines at West 32nd and West 33rd Streets and set back approximately 15 feet from the Seventh Avenue property line. At the roof, above the three floors of rooftop mechanicals, the building would rise an additional 60 feet to the top of a screen that would obscure the rooftop mechanicals. The building would be primarily faced with steel and glass curtain walls with darker, closely spaced vertical metal components and highly transparent cladding at the base level retail. Subway entrances would be located on West 32nd and West 33rd Streets near Seventh Avenue.

The Multi-Tenant Office Scenario would redevelop the development site with a 66-story, approximately 1,138-foot-tall commercial office building (including two floors of rooftop mechanicals). The building would have a six-story podium (126 feet tall), set back from Seventh Avenue by approximately 15 feet, that would occupy the entire development site. A tower would rise from the podium's center and would be set back approximately 83 feet from the podium's Seventh Avenue frontage, approximately 95 feet from the podium's east end, and 10 feet from the north and south property lines at West 32nd and West 33rd Streets. Above the two floors of rooftop mechanicals, the building would rise an additional 60 feet to the top of a screen that would obscure the rooftop mechanicals. The Multi-Tenant Office Scenario building would have highly transparent steel and glass curtain walls. Subway entrances would be located on West 32nd and West 33rd Streets near Seventh Avenue.

Because the S/NR-eligible Hotel Pennsylvania will be demolished with the No Action project in the No Action condition, the redevelopment of the development site with the proposed project would not constitute a significant adverse impact on architectural resources as compared to the No Action condition. It should be noted that, due to the S/NR eligibility of this building, HABS Level II documentation would be undertaken by the project sponsor prior to the hotel's demolition to record the history and appearance of the Hotel Pennsylvania. This commitment would be set forth in a Restrictive Declaration. The HABS documentation would be submitted to an appropriate public repository.

As part of the historic documentation of Hotel Pennsylvania, a museum quality display will be placed either in an area of the building lobby that is accessible without passage through a security barrier, or if lobby design does not allow for the inclusion of such a display, in the 33rd Street passageway, subject to approval by the New York City Transit Authority and the CPC Chair. The display shall be designed in consultation with a museum or historic site professional, shall follow guidelines for interpretive displays established by the National Park Service, and shall consist of interpretive panels with identified text and images derived from the HABS documentation, with the addition of architectural elements salvaged from the building. The proposed display will be submitted to LPC for review and comment prior to implementation. The text of the display will include a website link for access to the HABS documentation of the Hotel Pennsylvania.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

Like the No Action condition, with either the Single-Tenant Office Scenario or the Multi-Tenant Office Scenario, the proposed project would alter the context of nearby architectural resources by demolishing the masonry-faced 22-story (268-foot-tall) Hotel Pennsylvania and redeveloping the development site with a new tall building with a contemporary steel and glass curtain wall design. As with the No Action condition, the proposed project would result in a building that would be

taller than the existing Hotel Pennsylvania building. Both the 61-story (1,060-foot-tall) Single-Tenant Office Scenario building and the 66-story (1,139-foot-tall) Multi-Tenant Office Scenario building would be taller than the 34-story (580-foot-tall) No Action project. However, as in the No Action condition, the development of either the Single-Tenant Office Scenario building or the Multi-Tenant Office Scenario building would also be built in the context of both older and newer buildings that vary greatly in height, form, and materials. Buildings in the study area already comprise a variety of taller and shorter older, masonry-faced buildings and taller, newer buildings with both steel and glass curtain walls and masonry cladding. The 45-story Nelson Building and the 31-story former Governor Clinton Hotel, described above, are taller historic resources in the study area. In addition to these taller historic buildings, taller and newer buildings in the study area include the 57-story (750-foot-tall) 1 Penn Plaza Building built in 1972 and the 30-story (412-foot-tall) 2 Penn Plaza Building built in 1968. Newer tall buildings located outside the primary study area are also visible from vantage points near the development site and in the study area, including the 52-story (1,046-foot-tall) New York Times Building on West 40th Street and Eighth Avenue that is visible in views north on Seventh Avenue.

Also located outside the primary study area but visible from vantage points near the development site and in the primary study area is the Empire State Building located on West 34th Street and Fifth Avenue. This architectural resource, as described above, is a 102-story (1,250-foot-tall) building with a 14-story mast that reaches an overall building height of 1,453 feet tall. Many existing eastward views of the Empire State Building from the primary study area are already obscured or obstructed by the existing development site building and other intervening tall buildings, while primary study area views from most vantage points north and south of the development site would remain available from areas where these views currently exist. The proposed project would not obstruct or obscure views to the Empire State Building from vantage points in the study area north, east, or south of the development site. Views to the Empire State Building are discussed below in "Secondary Study Area" and also in Chapter 9, "Urban Design and Visual Resources."

It is not expected that the proposed project would result in any significant adverse impacts on architectural resources in the primary study area. The closest architectural resource, the 26-story former Equitable Life Assurance Company Building at 383-399 Seventh Avenue, is across West 32nd Street from the development site. In the future with the proposed project, this large masonry-faced building would continue to be sited in a context of other short and tall, older and newer buildings, faced in a variety of cladding materials. The primary façades of the buildings in the S/NR- and NYCL-eligible St. Francis Roman Catholic Church Complex at 129-143 West 31st Street face away from the development site onto West 31st Street, with buildings intervening, and would not be adversely impacted by the proposed project. Although this architectural resource includes some of the smaller-scale buildings in the primary study area, this building complex is already sited among a mix of buildings of varying heights and from different periods. Further, the context of these architectural resources would also be altered with the construction of the No Action building on the development site. As with the No Action building, in the future with the proposed project, under either scenario, some views south on Seventh Avenue from the southern portion of the Garment Center Historic District would include views of the proposed project. However, these changes would not be considered adverse due to the existing varied context of the architectural resources in the primary study area. Additionally, the proposed project would not obstruct significant views of any architectural resource, or adversely alter the visual setting of any resource in the primary study area.

As described above, the development site is within 90 feet of one architectural resource in the study area—the former Equitable Life Assurance Company Building is approximately 60 feet south of the development site. To avoid potential inadvertent construction-related impacts on this architectural resource, including ground-borne vibration, falling debris, and accidental damage from heavy machinery, a Construction Protection Plan (CPP) would be developed in consultation with LPC and would be implemented by a professional engineer prior to any demolition at the development site. The CPP would follow the guidelines set forth in section 523 of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, including conforming with LPC's *New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Guidelines for Construction Adjacent to a Historic Landmark* and *Protection Programs for Landmark Buildings*. The CPP would also comply with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Blasting* and the National Park Service's *Preservation Tech Notes, Temporary Protection Number 3: Protecting a Historic Structure during Adjacent Construction* in addition to the procedures set forth in DOB's *Technical Policy and Procedure Notice* (TPPN) #10/88. Other architectural resources in the study area would not be expected to be adversely effected by the proposed project as they are at a greater distance from the development site.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

With either scenario, and also with the No Action scenario, the proposed actions would result in the addition of a new tall building to the variety of taller and shorter buildings in the secondary study area. The new building on the development site would change the context of the Empire State Building in some eastward views from vantage points west of the development site. However, most existing views to the Empire State Building from the secondary study area would not be affected by the proposed development. More distant views of the Empire State Building, including some views from Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, would change with the new building on the development site, as the proposed project would introduce a new tall building to the Manhattan skyline. However, the new building would be shorter than the Empire State Building, which would remain the tallest building in New York City. In addition, the approximately 1,000-foot distance between the development site and the Empire State Building would further diminish the perceived height of the new building in more distant views. The development on Hudson Yards Site 32/33 will be located on the southwest corner of West 33rd Street and Ninth Avenue west of the development site and will alter the context of some eastward views of the Empire State Building from the secondary study area. Further, it is not unusual for historic buildings in New York City, and in Midtown in particular, to be located in a mixed context of older and newer buildings of greatly varied heights, styles, and cladding materials.

Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the isolation of the Empire State Building from the surrounding environment; it would not significantly reduce the visual prominence of this architectural resource or substantially alter its public visibility; nor would the new building introduce a visual, audible, or atmospheric element that would be out of character or adversely alter the setting of architectural resources in the study areas or more distant vantage points that would diminish the qualities of this architectural resource that make it significant.

Overall, architectural resources in both the primary and secondary study areas would not be adversely affected by the proposed project. ✷