Chapter 8: Urban Design and Visual Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential for the proposed actions to result in significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources. According to the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*, urban design is defined as the totality of components that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space. These components include streets, buildings, visual resources, open spaces, natural resources, and wind. An urban design assessment considers whether and how a project may change the experience of a pedestrian in a given area. The *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines recommend the preparation of a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources, followed by a detailed analysis, if warranted, based on the conclusions of the preliminary assessment. The analysis provided below addresses urban design characteristics and visual resources for existing conditions, the future without the proposed actions, and the future with the proposed actions.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

This analysis finds that the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts related to urban design and visual resources.

New development that would result from the proposed actions would be of greater height and density than in conditions absent the proposed actions. However, the increase in size would be in keeping with the scale of other buildings in the study area and in keeping with the ongoing redevelopment of the neighborhood, which includes a number of existing modern high-rise buildings. New uses, including residential apartments and ground-floor retail, would activate the streetscape and enliven the pedestrian experience.

There are no visual resources on the project site, rezoning area, or the remainder of the project block. The proposed actions would not change urban design features so that the context of a natural or built feature is adversely altered, and would not partially or fully block any significant public views to a visual resource.

B. METHODOLOGY

APPROACH

Based on the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources is appropriate when there is the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning. Examples include projects that modify yard, height, and setback requirements, and projects that result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be allowed "as-of-right."

As part of the proposed actions, the M2-3 portion of the block would be rezoned to C4-7 and a small portion of the M1-5 district would also become C4-7. A text amendment would provide

that 20 percent of the residential floor area on the Proposed Project Site be reserved for affordable housing to achieve the Inclusionary Housing bonus, would not discourage more than one floor of commercial uses, and would allow an automotive showroom with repairs, applicable to the rezoning area.

The additional floor area that would be made available under the proposed actions would allow for the development of up to approximately 1.2 million gross square feet (gsf) of residential and commercial uses on the proposed project site (development site 1) and a hotel of up to approximately 117,612 gsf on a projected development site within the proposed rezoning area (development site 2).

Since the proposed actions include the rezoning of a portion of a city block and would result in new buildings larger than what is permitted by current zoning, a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources is warranted.

The *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines state that if the preliminary assessment shows that changes to the pedestrian environment are sufficiently significant to require greater explanation and further study, then a detailed analysis is appropriate. Detailed analyses are generally appropriate for area-wide rezonings, general large-scale developments, or projects that would result in substantial changes to the built environment of a historic district or components of a historic building that contribute to the building's historic significance. Conditions that merit consideration for further analysis of visual resources include when the project partially or completely blocks a view corridor or a natural or built visual resource and that resource is rare in the area or considered a defining feature of the neighborhood, or when the project changes urban design features so that the context of a natural or built visual resource is altered.

The proposed actions would not involve an area-wide rezoning; would not involve a general large-scale development; would not result in substantial changes to the built environment of a historic district or components of a historic building; and would not block view corridors or affect views of important natural or built features. As described below, while the proposed actions would allow for an increase in allowable floor area, the preliminary analysis concludes that the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to urban design and visual resources. Therefore, further analysis of urban design and visual resources is not required.

The *CEQR Technical Manual* recommends an analysis of pedestrian wind conditions for projects that would result in the construction of large buildings at locations that experience high wind conditions (such as along the waterfront, or other location where winds from the waterfront are not attenuated by buildings or natural features), which may result in an exacerbation of wind conditions due to "channelization" or "downwash" effects that may affect pedestrian safety. Factors to be considered in determining whether such a study should be conducted include: locations that could experience high wind conditions, such as along the waterfront; size, and orientation of the proposed buildings; the number of proposed buildings to be constructed; and the site plan and surrounding pedestrian context of the proposed project. The proposed project site is not located on the waterfront (the tower portion of the proposed project would be more than 750 feet from the Hudson River) or in a location that experiences high wind conditions. Furthermore, the building includes setbacks that would minimize the potential for downwashing of winds to the street level. Therefore, a study of wind conditions and their effect on pedestrian level safety is not warranted.

STUDY AREA

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study area for urban design is the area where the project may influence land use patterns and the built environment, and is generally consistent with the land use analysis study area. For visual resources, the view corridors within the study area from which such resources are publicly viewable should be identified. The land use study area may serve as the initial basis for analysis; however, in many cases where significant visual resources exist, it may be appropriate to look beyond the land use study area to encompass views outside of this area, as is often the case with waterfront sites or sites within or near historic districts.

Consistent with the analysis of land use, zoning, and public policy, the study area for the urban design and visual resources analysis has been defined as the area within a ¼-mile radius of the project site. This study area roughly extends from West 62nd Street to the north, West 51st Street to the south, between Ninth /Columbus Avenue and Tenth/Amsterdam Avenue[1] to the east, and the Hudson River to the west (see **Figure 8-1**).

C. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS

URBAN DESIGN

Rezoning Area

The rezoning area is located on the eastern end of Block 1104, which is bounded by West 57th Street, Eleventh Avenue, West 56th Street, and Twelfth Avenue. The rezoning area encompasses seven tax lots (Lots 25, 29, 31, 36, 40, 44, and 55) that are occupied by commercial and auto-related uses. This includes the proposed project site (Lots 31, 40, 44, and 55) and three outparcel lots (25, 29, and 36). See **Figure 8-2**.

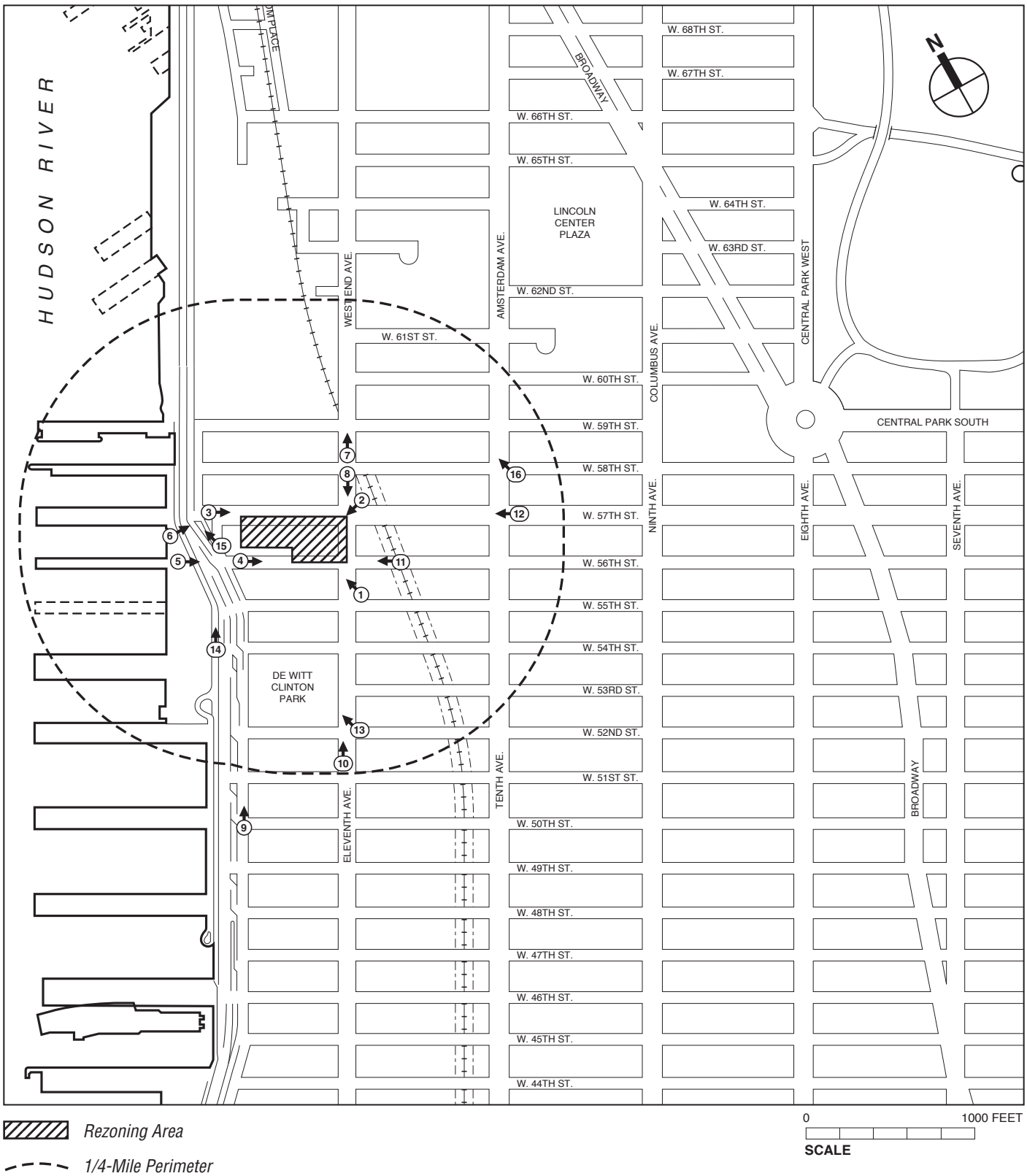
Proposed Project Site

The proposed project site includes a mix of architecturally undistinguished utilitarian buildings (see **Figure 8-3 and 8-4**). The site includes a one-story (18-foot tall) auto repair shop at the northwest corner of the rezoning area. Directly adjacent to the east is a five-story (40-foot-tall) brick parking garage fronting on West 57th Street. Also along West 57th Street are two two-story car dealership/service structures. Both are through-block lots: the easternmost car dealership (40 foot-tall) also has frontage on Eleventh Avenue, while the other has frontage on West 56th Street, in the form of a two-story (40-foot tall) gray brick building. There are numerous curb cuts along the project site, including six curb cuts on West 57th Street alone. The total lot area of the proposed project site is approximately 83,303 square feet.

Remainder of Rezoning Area

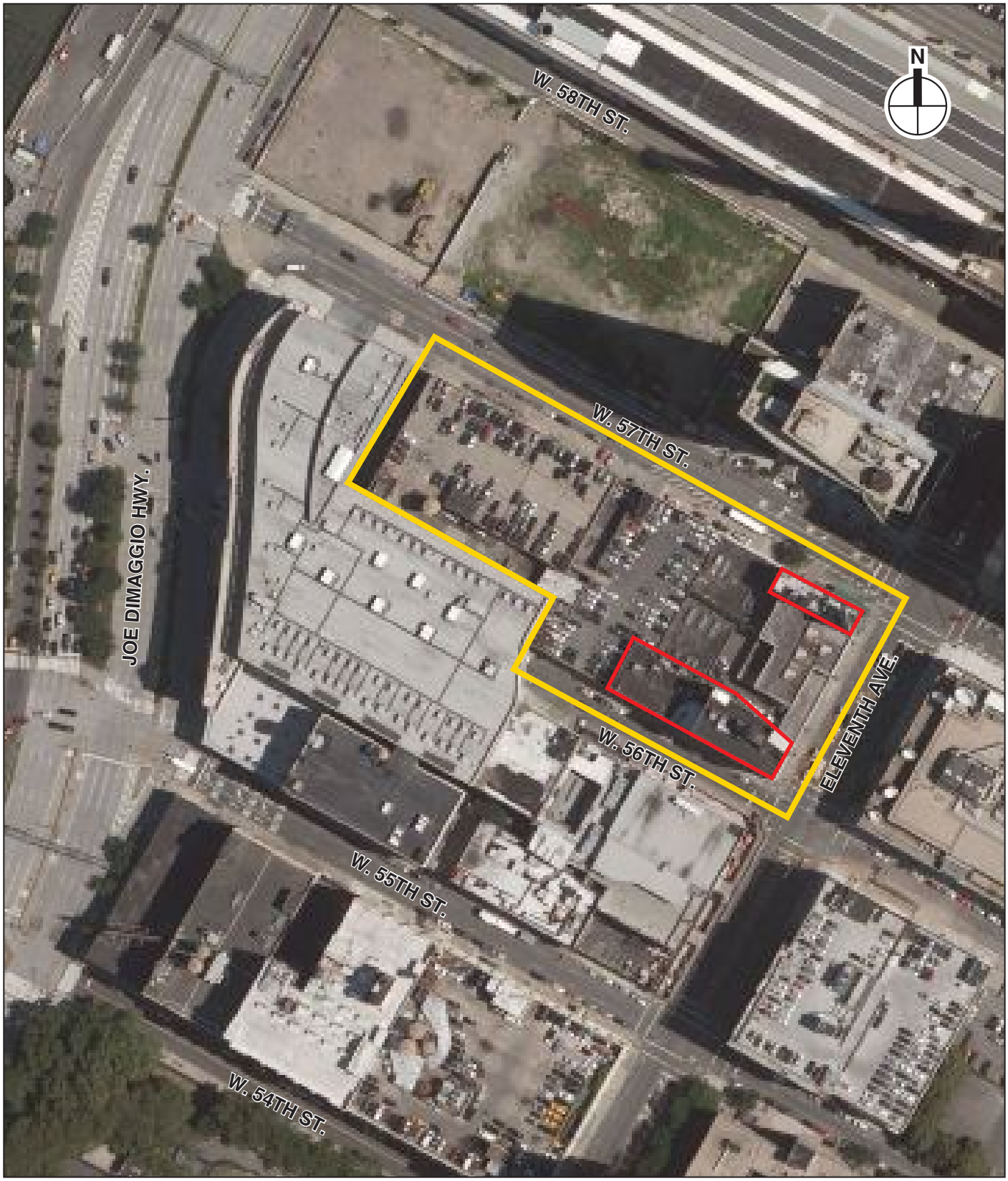
The three "outparcels" within the rezoning area that are not owned by the applicant (see **Figures 8-3** and **8-4**). At the southeast corner of the project block with frontage on West 56th Street are two lots totaling approximately 10,700 square feet that are under common ownership and function as a single building. At the corner of West 56th Street and Eleventh Avenue is a six-

[1] North of West 59th Street, Tenth Avenue becomes Amsterdam Avenue and Eleventh Avenue becomes West End Avenue.



Urban Design and Visual Resources Study Area

6.21.13



Rezoning Area

Outparcels

0 100 200 FEET

SCALE

Project Block Aerial Photograph

606 WEST 57TH STREET

Figure 8-2



View of Project Site and Rezoning Area, looking north from West 56th Street and Eleventh Avenue **1**



View of Project Site and Rezoning Area, looking west from West 57th Street and Eleventh Avenue **2**

Views of the Project Site and the Rezoning Area

Figure 8-3



View of Project Site, along West 57th Street, looking east **3**



View of Project Site and Study Area along West 56th Street, looking east **4**

Views of the Project Site and Study Area

Figure 8-4

story (85-foot-tall) utilitarian brick structure with car dealership use at the ground floor and office space on the upper floors. A lower wing further west along West 56th Street includes a three-story (60-foot tall) utilitarian brick structure with three steel roll-down gates at the ground floor. At the northeast corner of the project block is a four-story (60-foot-tall) brick office building with ground-floor restaurant use on an approximately 2,500 square-foot lot. Cell towers and a billboard are mounted on the structure's roof.

Project Block

The remainder of the project block is occupied by a modern 4-story, 117-foot tall structure that is clad in masonry and glass and spans the space above West 56th Street, extending from West 55th Street to West 57th Street and fronting on Twelfth Avenue/the Route 9A service road (Photos 5 and 6 of **Figure 8-5**). This building was constructed by the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) and contains garage and office space. The building's Twelfth Avenue façade mirrors the curve of the avenue.

Study Area

The street pattern in the study area is the typical Manhattan grid system, with wide avenues running north-south (**Figure 8-6** and **8-7**) and narrow cross streets running east-west (**Figure 8-8**). An exception is West 57th Street, which is a wide east-west street and a major thoroughfare. Several superblocks also interrupt the typical pattern. DeWitt Clinton Park (see Photo 13 of **Figure 8-9**) occupies the superblock bounded by West 52nd and 54th Streets, Eleventh Avenue, and Twelfth Avenue/Route 9A. The superblock bounded by West 59th and 61st Streets, West End Avenue, and Riverside Boulevard/Route 9A is planned for development as part of the Riverside Center project.

Route 9A (the West Side Highway), which runs roughly parallel to the shoreline of the Hudson River, and the river itself form the study area's western boundary. Route 9A is a broad highway with a narrow, landscaped median; it is elevated on a viaduct north of West 57th Street. Twelfth Avenue, which in this area functions essentially as a service road for Route 9A, terminates at West 59th Street. Eleventh/West End Avenue is a major two-way thoroughfare in the study area, and 57th Street is a wide cross-town street that extends from the Hudson River to the East River. The remainder of the cross streets in the study area are generally one-way and less traveled.

The topography of the study area generally slopes downward from the north and east to the Hudson River and is generally flat south of the project block. In particular, the elevation of West 57th Street goes from 84 feet at Ninth Avenue to 7 feet at Route 9A. West 56th Street displays a similar downward slope. The predominant natural feature in the study area is the Hudson River. The river's edge is mostly man-made, with a variety of granite and concrete walls and rip rap. Along the river is the study area's major open space, Hudson River Park. The Clinton Cove section of Hudson River Park is located between Pier 94 (near West 54th Street) and Pier 97 (near West 57th Street). This area includes an esplanade with benches, lawns, shade trees, and a public boat house at the waterfront (Photo 14 of **Figure 8-9**).

Pier 97, currently a DSNY facility, is being rebuilt as a public pier (see Photo 15 of **Figure 8-10**). Amenities on Pier 97 will include courts for active recreation, a playground and a lawn, as well as berths for historic ships. North of Hudson River Park, from West 59th Street to West 72nd Street, is Riverside Park South, which is built on the site of a former railroad yard. This park contains multi-purpose athletic fields, baseball fields, handball and basketball courts, playground equipment, a 740-foot-long recreational pier (Pier 1), overlook terraces, esplanades



View of DSNY building over West 56th Street, looking east **5**



View toward Durst Development Site and Con-Ed Power House, looking east **6**

Views of the Project Block

Figure 8-5



View north on Eleventh Avenue, from West 58th Street **7**



View south on Eleventh Avenue, from West 58th Street **8**

Views of the Study Area
Figure 8-6



View along Twelfth Avenue/Route 9A, looking north **9**



View north on Eleventh Avenue, from West 51st Street **10**

Views of the Study Area
Figure 8-7



View along West 56th Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, looking west **11**



View along West 57th Street near Tenth Avenue, looking west **12**

Views of the Study Area
Figure 8-8



View of DeWitt Clinton Park, looking northwest from West 52nd St and Eleventh Avenue **13**



View of Clinton Cove Park, looking north **14**

Views of the Study Area
Figure 8-9

and promontories, landscaped areas, and walkways and bikeways. The park was designed to retain the industrial flavor of the railroad yard. Angular paths, intended to evoke railroad tracks, have been created from old concrete railroad platforms; other reused railroad artifacts include ramps, piers, and a gantry. Stretching from Battery Park to West 59th Street between Route 9A and Hudson River Park is the Route 9A Walkway/Bikeway, which provides off-street paved paths for active recreational activities such as running, biking, and rollerblading. The walkway/bikeway continues northward through Riverside Park South.

At the southern end of the study area is DeWitt Clinton Park. DeWitt Clinton Park is set on a raised promontory above Twelfth Avenue. It is bordered by a low metal fence along Eleventh Avenue and a taller chain-link fence along Twelfth Avenue. Within the park are baseball and soccer fields, paved basketball and handball courts, a dog run, perennial gardens, and a playground with a children's spray park that operates in warm weather (see Photo 13 of **Figure 8-9**).

The 59th Street Recreation Center, a public recreation center, is located in the midblock between West 59th and 60th Streets. It is a two-story, through-block brick structure with an entrance portico and stone ornamentation. There are also several privately owned, publicly accessible open spaces in the study area that are associated with large-scale residential and commercial buildings.

The study area is urban in character, with streets flanked by concrete sidewalks. Parked cars are located on most streets, and buses park along West 59th Street west of Eleventh/West End Avenue and on the north side of DeWitt Clinton Park. There is typical street furniture (e.g., bus shelters, newspaper bins, and modern lampposts) throughout the study area, and some large signage on the sides of or atop buildings. There is also large directional signage on gantries above Route 9A. There are few street trees in the study area outside of the open spaces described above. The riverfront open spaces are well used by pedestrians, joggers, and walkers; otherwise, most of the study area's pedestrian activity is located along Tenth/Amsterdam Avenue rather than the cross-streets and Eleventh/West End Avenue, except near the area's major institutional uses.

The study area is densely developed, particularly to the north and east. It is mostly composed of recently built residential and mixed-use towers, new and older community facility and institutional buildings, and a large industrial building (the Consolidated Edison Power House), although there are also commercial and automotive uses south of West 57th Street. As described below in "The Future without the Proposed Actions," there are also a number of sites within the study area that are currently under construction or awaiting development, including the block directly north of the project site, which will be developed with an approximately 450-foot tall tower.

The western portion of the block between West 57th and 58th Streets is currently being redeveloped. This area is currently vacant and surrounded by a wooden construction fence. The eastern portion of the block is developed with a residential building with ground floor retail and parking uses (The Helena) and a building with mini-storage uses. The Helena is a 38-story, 421-foot tall apartment building with ground floor retail on the southeastern corner of the block along West 57th Street and Eleventh Avenue. The mini-storage facility is a 6-story, 72 foot-tall concrete and masonry warehouse located to the north of the Helena along Eleventh Avenue.

Two blocks north of the project site is the Consolidated Edison Power House, which comprises the entire block bounded by West 58th and 59th Streets, Eleventh Avenue, and Route 9A. The

power house is a six-story, bulky industrial building built in 1904, highly ornamented and constructed of buff-colored brick with terra cotta detail, and is an architectural resource (see Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources", and see Photo 6 of **Figure 8-5**). The tall smokestack on the Eleventh Avenue side of the building is approximately 500 feet above grade. Consolidated Edison operates a steam power station in this building. West of the power house on the Hudson River is Pier 99, DSNY's West 59th Street Marine Transfer Station (MTS) (see Photo 15 of **Figure 8-10**). This facility is contained within a utilitarian, metal-clad piershed building.

North of the Power House is the Riverside Center development site. This site currently includes two 2- and 3-story brick buildings that have been connected for their present use as a parking garage. The buildings are built to the lot line and have been heavily altered; many of their windows have been enclosed with brick, cement, or wood. A paved parking lot for the United States Postal Service (USPS), which uses the lot for the storage of postal vehicles, is located in the southwest corner of this site. An Amtrak rail line is located within a sub-grade culvert at the northeast corner of the site. As noted below in "Future Without the Proposed Actions" this site will ultimately contain five buildings 31 to 44 stories in height (393 to 535 feet tall), as well as publicly accessible open space.

North of the Riverside Center site is the Riverside South complex. This recently developed area, which extends north to West 72nd Street west of West End Avenue, has been constructed with large-scale residential buildings with accessory retail, office, and parking uses. These new buildings have large footprints and are set back above a wide base with one or more towers. The structures are built to their lot lines, creating strong streetwalls, and are mainly faced in glass, stone, and metal. They include Parcel O, a 25-story, 222 foot-tall, masonry clad residential buildings at West 61st Street and West End Avenue (see Photo 7 of **Figure 8-6**). West of Parcel O at West 61st Street, a site is being developed with one 13-story tower and another 33-story tower.

Along West End Avenue, between West 60th and West 61st Streets, is a modern six-story building with a brick, metal, and glass façade that contains the Abraham Joshua Heschel High School; the Heschel School has recently expanded into an adjacent site at the corner of West 61st Street (see Photo 7 of **Figure 8-6**). Further south on West End Avenue, between West 59th and 60th Streets, is 10 West End Avenue, a new 31-story (400-foot-tall) residential tower with ground-floor retail. The building is built to the lot line on Eleventh/West End Avenue and is clad in glass and brick. The blocks between West 58th and 61st Streets and Eleventh/West End and Tenth/Amsterdam Avenues have several large-scale sites that are under construction and have been recently completed for institutional, residential, and other mixed-use buildings. Among these developments is the expansion of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the Adagio 60/Sessanta project at 243 West 60th Street. Residential uses in these blocks are modern and high-density and include the 35-story (335-foot-tall) Concerto, the 33-story (380-foot-tall) Element Condominiums at 555 West 59th Street, and the 33-story (307-foot-tall) Roosevelt Hospital staff residence on the eastern side of the block between West 59th and 60th Streets.

John Jay College occupies the full block between West 58th and West 59th Streets and Eleventh and Tenth Avenues. The college's existing building on Tenth Avenue between West 58th and 59th Streets is a historic, red brick U-shaped building with Flemish gables (see View 16 of **Figure 8-10**). As noted above, the college has developed the remainder of this block with a 13-story (239-foot-tall) modern glass and metal-clad facility (see Photo 7 of **Figure 8-6**). St. Luke's



View along Route 9A, looking northwest. DSNY's West 59th Street Marine Transfer Station is visible across Route 9A **15**



View north on Tenth Avenue from West 58th Street **16**

Views of the Study Area
Figure 8-10

Roosevelt Hospital is located opposite John Jay College, in a 13-story, red brick-clad modern building on the west side of Tenth Avenue between West 58th and 59th Streets.

South of John Jay College is a 20-story (298-foot-tall) dark glass and metal-clad building containing a BMW dealership and offices. This building, 555 West 57th Street, occupies the full blockfront between West 57th and 58th Streets, is set back from the lot line, and has a glass-enclosed car showroom at the corner of West 57th Street.

South of West 57th Street, buildings in the study area are generally older, shorter, and contain more commercial uses. Currently, the tallest building in this portion of the area is the 400-foot-tall telephone switching equipment building on Tenth Avenue between West 53rd and 54th Streets. There are also a few residential towers in this area, including the 39-story (346-foot-tall) Clinton Towers development at the northeast corner of West 54th Street and Eleventh Avenue. This older, L-shaped residential tower is clad in brick with balconies (see Photo 10 of **Figure 8-7**). South of West 57th Street on Eleventh Avenue, there are several auto dealerships and service facilities and various other small commercial uses south to West 54th Street, mostly contained within shorter, utilitarian brick and concrete structures built to the lot line. A CBS television studio occupies a series of 2- to 6-story red brick buildings on the block bounded by West 56th and 57th Streets and Tenth and Eleventh Avenues (see Photo 4 of **Figure 8-4**).

Farther south, the interior block portions between West 54th and 56th Streets and Tenth and Eleventh Avenues are occupied by the Harborview Terrace housing complex, two buildings 14- and 15-stories (120- and 128-feet tall) in height. These buildings are oriented north-south, unusual for their mid-block site. Fronting on Tenth Avenue between West 55th and 56th Streets is the Westport, a modern 24-story (243-foot-tall) red brick condominium tower. Within these two blocks there are also plaza, playground, and surface parking areas, tenements, and smaller apartment buildings. To the south, on the block bounded by West 53rd and 54th Streets, a mixed-use development containing residential and a ground floor car dealership (310 feet tall at its highest point) has recently been constructed at 770 Eleventh Avenue that occupies more than half of the block. Directly west of this development, on the block directly north of DeWitt Clinton Park, is a series of concrete loft and warehouse buildings, each of which fully occupies its lot (see Photo 10 of **Figure 8-7**).

The block directly south of DeWitt Clinton Park that is bounded by West 52nd and West 51st Streets and Eleventh and Twelfth Avenue is composed of older brick structures. A television studio (22-feet tall) flanked by brick 4- to 5-story (44- to 55-feet tall) tenements front Eleventh Avenue. The interior of the block is a mix of brick tenements and industrial buildings (22- to 87-feet tall). A newly clad stucco building with Classical decoration (50-feet tall) stretches the length of Twelfth Avenue between West 51st and West 52nd Streets.

At the Hudson River at the southern edge of the study area are Piers 92 and 94, between West 52nd and West 55th Streets. A portion of Pier 92 and all of Pier 94 are currently used for consumer and trade show events. The remainder of Pier 92 is used for the embarking and disembarking of cruise ship passengers. These uses are housed within two-story, 45-foot-tall structures. Pier 94 also has a head house that is identifiable by its shallow, multi-gabled roof. A bi-level ramp providing access to Piers 88, 90, and 92 begins to rise from grade in front of Pier 94.

Within the study area, building footprint sizes vary widely. Some buildings—including the new John Jay College expansion building, and the Consolidated Edison Power House—occupy most of entire city blocks, while other, mostly older and utilitarian structures, are no more than 25 feet

wide. Footprint shapes are mostly rectangular but also include square, T-shaped, and L-shaped (the Clinton Towers) sites; in the future, the study area will also include the more dynamically shaped structure on the redevelopment site north of the project site across West 57th Street. Late 19th- and early 20th-century buildings are typically clad in brick, concrete, or cast stone, with more contemporary structures designed with steel and glass curtain walls. Some of the newer apartment buildings in the area are clad in brick with punched windows; some of these buildings also have projecting balconies. The frontages of many buildings in the study area are set at the lot line; however, some—as discussed above—are set back behind plazas or within landscaped settings.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Visual resources are an area's unique or important public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features. These can include historic structures, parks, natural features (such as rivers), or important views.

Project Site, Remainder of Rezoning Area, and Project Block

There are no visual resources on the project site, rezoning area, or the remainder of the project block. At the time of this analysis, the Consolidated Edison Power House, particularly the south side of the building, can be seen from the sidewalks adjacent to the project block. At this close location the scale and prominence of the building's significant bulk and smokestack are not as identifiable as elsewhere in the study area. Views west on West 56th Street are largely blocked by the new Department of Sanitation facility, which extends over this street at Twelfth Avenue/Route 9A (see Photo 11 of **Figure 8-8**). Views west along West 57th Street and the western edge of the block include a small portion of Hudson River Park, the river itself, and the New Jersey Palisades in the distance. Views east along West 56th and 57th Streets and north and south along Eleventh Avenue, continue for fairly long distances but do not contain any notable features.

Study Area

Within the study area, Riverside Park South, Hudson River Park, and the elevated portions of Route 9A and Riverside Boulevard provide expansive views of the Hudson River and the New Jersey Palisades. Because it is a wide street, West 57th Street also provides a view corridor looking west to the Hudson River and New Jersey beyond (see Photo 12 of **Figure 8-8**). This view is enhanced by the rise in elevation going eastward, particularly in the blocks between Eleventh and Ninth Avenues. Some of the narrower cross streets also provide views west to the river and New Jersey; however, views west along West 59th Street end with the MTS facility on the waterfront. Views west near DeWitt Clinton Park include the piershed buildings and transportation viaducts of Piers 92 and 94. Views west on West 60th and 61st Streets are largely blocked by parking uses and vegetation on the Riverside Center site as well as the Route 9A viaduct beyond.

The Consolidated Edison Power House and its tall brick smokestack are visible throughout much the study area, particularly from Riverside Park South, Hudson River Park, the elevated portion of Route 9A north of the project block, and along Eleventh/West End Avenue (see Photo 6 of **Figure 8-5**). The smokestack also can be seen from Amsterdam Avenue between West 60th and 61st Streets through the playground of P.S. 191. From certain vantage points in these areas, the full bulk of this massive building is visible due to the lack of development on the sites north and south of the Power House. Views of the Power House from the cross-streets and the more

northerly and southerly portions of the study area, however, are blocked by intervening tall buildings and changes in topography. Views north and south along Eleventh/West End Avenue are long and include modern high-rise buildings; however, other than the power house, these views do not contain any notable features. Views north and south along Tenth/Amsterdam Avenue and views east on the east-west streets similarly continue for long distances. Although these views take in the multitude of buildings that line the streets and portions of the Manhattan skyline, they do not contain any notable features. Although the modern buildings in the study area are not considered to be visual resources, they do contribute to its visual character.

Route 9A and the more easterly portions of Hudson River Park provide views to the project site, which can also be seen from Eleventh Avenue and nearby cross streets.

THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

URBAN DESIGN

Project Site, Remainder of Rezoning Area, and Project Block

Absent the proposed actions, all existing uses in the rezoning area are expected to continue unchanged. Likewise, there are no changes expected to the DSNY facility at the west end of the block, which is a relatively new building. There would be no change to urban design; the project site would continue to be an amalgam of undistinguished utilitarian buildings, and the other buildings in the rezoning area would remain the same.

Study Area

There are several projects within the study area that are expected to be completed by 2017.

The proposed 625 West 57th Street development, directly north of the project block, will introduce two new buildings and renovate two additional buildings with residential, retail, and community facility uses. One new building would be a proposed mixed-use (residential, office, and retail) building that would rise to an elevation of approximately 470 feet, or 35 stories. The building would approximate a hexahedron shape around an interior courtyard, with the lowest portions along Twelfth Avenue and West 57th Street. The building would slope up toward the northeast, with the tallest point at the northeast corner. The second new building, a community facility use building, which would be developed in the midblock fronting on West 58th Street, would be one to two stories tall. The renovations would occur to existing buildings on the block: the project will convert the mini-storage facility to residential, retail, and community facility uses, and new retail space would be created in the Helena building.

West of the project site along the Hudson River waterfront is Pier 97, which is being redeveloped with a one-acre addition to the Hudson River Park open space area (a recreational lawn and playground).

North of the project block, development of the Riverside Center complex will continue, with three of the five planned buildings expected by 2017. These buildings will host residential, public school, hotel, and retail uses. Additionally, continued development of Riverside South will occur north of this complex, just outside of the study area's boundaries.

At the southern end of the study area, newly renovated exhibition space and a waterfront esplanade will be constructed on Piers 92 and 94; a new building with affordable housing will be

developed at 530-548 West 53rd Street, between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues; and the Harborview Terrace project will be expanded with two new 15-story buildings.

These projects will maintain the study area's existing trend toward the development of high-rise buildings with a mixture of uses, as well as the provision of new open space. Together, they will represent the continued evolution of the area's visual character from older, underutilized sites (and in many cases former industrial uses) to more modern, mixed-use development with an increased presence of residential uses.

VISUAL RESOURCES

There are no visual resources on the project block, and this condition is not expected to change in the future without the proposed actions.

Within the study area, the redevelopment of Pier 97 with open space for Hudson River Park will enlarge the existing open space resources of the park, and could be expected to enhance the setting, access, and enjoyment of the Hudson River and open views across to New Jersey. Similarly, the renovation at Piers 92 and 94 including a waterfront esplanade could be expected to improve conditions at the southern end of the study area.

The setting of the Consolidated Edison Power House will change as open undeveloped areas to its north and south are redeveloped with tall new mixed-use buildings. However, the large block-long structure will still be visible and prominent in views from the surrounding streets.

PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

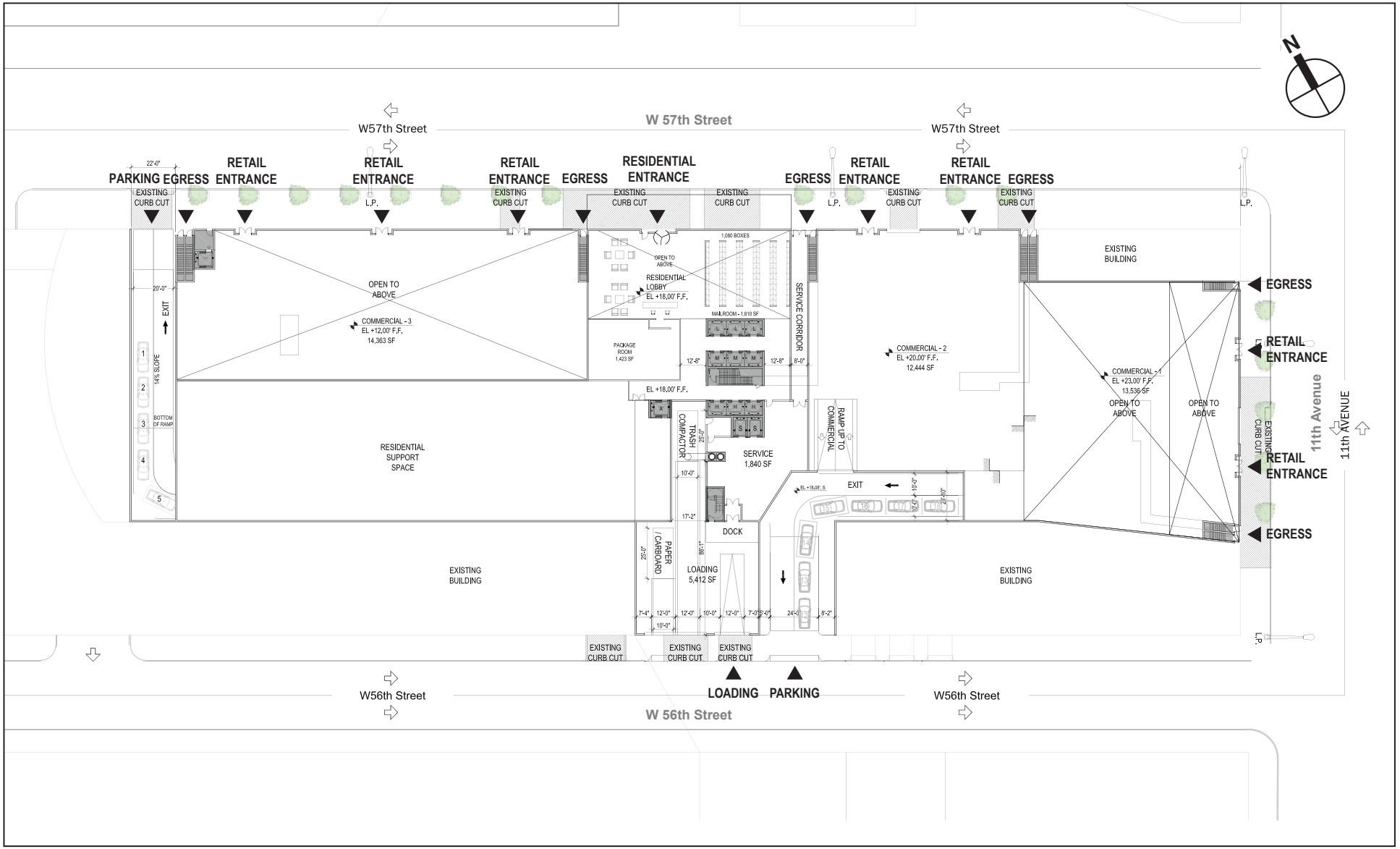
URBAN DESIGN

The proposed actions would facilitate the development of new buildings in the rezoning area containing a mix of residential, retail, and hotel uses. The new development would occur on the proposed project site and on one outparcel site, as described below.

Proposed Project Site

With the proposed actions, the applicant intends to construct a new mixed-use tower on the lots under its control. The tower would be a 42-story tiered structure: the streetwall base of the building would rise up to the 6th floor (approximately 76 feet above grade) with a second narrow tier up to the 28th floor (approximately 290 feet above grade), and finally a narrow tier above the 30th floor. The highest tier of the building would rise to a total height of approximately 450 feet. In some locations, the upper tiers would be designed to cantilever above the lower tiers (see **Figures 8-11** through **8-16)**.

The intention of the applicant and its design team is to visually reduce the mass of the building by breaking the bulk into distinct pieces rather than a monolithic tower. From a design perspective, the proposed building is intended to include a number of distinct components or "building blocks." On the eastern half of the proposed project site would be two perpendicular towers, connected by a glass bridge. A "cube" would sit atop the two towers but be offset to create the appearance of a separate massing. At the top of the building there would be parapet enclosing mechanical equipment. A fourth building element would be a lower wing along West 57th Street, which itself would be distinguished from the rest of the building by another glass bridge. The upper stories of the building would be largely glass, while the lower floors would include limestone or cast stone components.



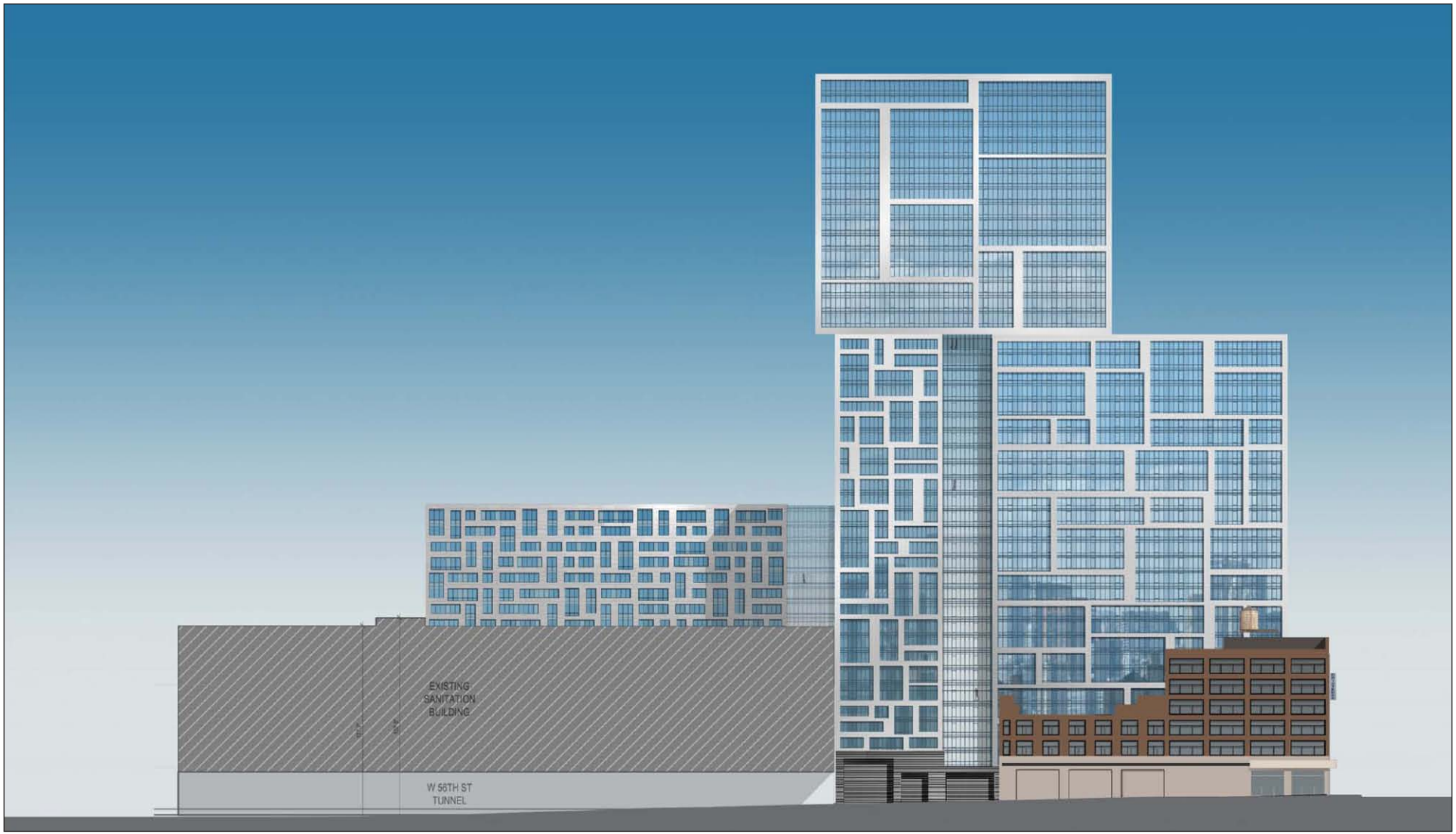
Illustrative Site Plan

Figure 8-11



Illustrative Rendering North Elevation

Figure 8-12



Illustrative Rendering South Elevation



Illustrative Renderings East/West Elevation



Illustrative Rendering–
Looking East Along West 57th Street

Figure 8-15



Illustrative Rendering–
Looking Northwest From Eleventh Avenue

Figure 8-16

The building on the proposed project site would contain approximately 1.2 million gsf of residential and commercial uses, as well as space for a public parking garage. Ground-floor retail space—with frontages planned for both West 57th Street and Eleventh Avenue—would activate the streetscape and enliven the pedestrian experience.

It is expected that the residential space would be accessed through a ground floor lobby located on the northern side of the building along to West 57th Street, among the retail uses on that portion of the ground floor. The introduction of residential uses to the project site would create an active 24/7 presence along the street and would further contribute to a livelier pedestrian atmosphere.

The proposed parking garage would include up to 500 attended parking spaces on three below-grade levels. Parking access and egress may be provided from both West 56th Street and West 57th Street, but alternately access and egress may be provided from West 57th Street only. West 56th Street would house a service area and loading dock. Compared to conditions absent the proposed actions, there would be a substantial reduction in the amount of curb cuts on the project site and an attendant improvement in visual conditions and the pedestrian experience.

The proposed actions would result in a building of greater height and density than the buildings now on the project site that would continue to exist absent the proposed actions. Specifically, the new mixed-use building on the site would be 450 feet tall, with 43 floors plus mechanical bulkhead. The new building on the site would be approximately 395 feet taller (450 feet versus 55 feet, the height of the existing four-story building) in comparison to the tallest existing building on the project site. However, the increase in size would be in keeping with the scale of other buildings in the area. A new building on the project site would be in keeping with the ongoing redevelopment found throughout the neighborhood, which includes a number of existing modern high-rise buildings such as 10 West End Avenue (400 feet), the Element Condominiums at 555 West 59th Street (380-foot-tall) and the Clinton Towers (346 feet), as well as tall new buildings that are planned for the area such as 625 West 57th Street and the Riverside Center buildings.

Remainder of Rezoning Area

The proposed actions would facilitate the development of a new, approximately 117,612 gsf hotel at the southeast corner of the rezoning area. Based on a potential design that would utilize all of the floor area available under the proposed actions, the building could rise to approximately 38 stories. Like the new building on the project site, this development would contribute to the developing mixed-use character of the area, and could serve patrons of area destinations that attract tourists and business travelers, such as Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Theater District, and the Midtown central business district.

With the proposed actions, the lot on the northeast corner of the rezoning area would remain unchanged with a five-story commercial building. The lower wings of the new building on the project site that would surround this existing building are intended to reflect its lower massing and create a contextual streetwall that is in keeping with this older structure (see **Figure 8-17**).

Project Block

The proposed actions would not facilitate any other new development on the project block. The remainder of the project block would remain in its current use as a DSNY vehicle maintenance and storage garage. While the new mixed-use building on the project site would be taller than the DSNY building (approximately 450 feet tall versus 117 feet tall), it would continue to exist



Existing/ No Build Condition



NOTE: For Illustrative Purposes Only

Build Condition

Comparative Views:
Existing, No Build, and Build Conditions
View Southwest from West 57th Street

Figure 8-17

in a mixed use urban environment with a wide range of building shapes and sizes. The anticipated materials for the proposed project site—a modern design of glass and stone—would also complement the existing glass and limestone design of the recently built DSNY building (see **Figure 8-18**).

Study Area

The proposed actions would not result in any changes to natural features, open spaces, or streets in the study area. The proposed actions would alter the urban design of the project site and one of the outparcels within the rezoning area, but would be in keeping with recently developed residential towers and new institutional buildings and buildings currently under construction, including the proposed 625 West 57th Street development on the block directly north of the project site. Like several existing and proposed structures in the study area—the Consolidated Edison Power House, the new John Jay College building, and the proposed 625 West 57th Street development—the proposed mixed-use building would have a large footprint, covering the majority of the proposed project site. While the allowable floor area within the rezoning area would increase with the proposed actions up to a maximum FAR of 12.0 (including the Inclusionary Housing bonus), the resulting development would not be out of context with the larger residential buildings in the surrounding area. The proposed actions, including development of an approximately 31-story hotel on projected development site 2, would introduce a different mix of uses to the project block compared with the future without the proposed actions, but these uses would be compatible with the existing uses and land use trends in the study area. The proposed actions—in conjunction with other developments within the study area—would contribute to the conversion of the Eleventh/West End Avenue corridor into a more residential boulevard. The proposed actions also would contribute to the variety of building types and heights that compose Manhattan's evolving and dynamic skyline.

The height of the new building on the project site would be consistent with that of other new residential towers in the surrounding area, including the proposed 625 West 57th Street and Riverside Center buildings to the north, which will be between 31 and 44 stories in height (393 to 535 feet tall). Similarly, a new hotel building on development site 2 (at approximately 31 stories) would be in keeping with the scale of development in the surrounding neighborhood.

The study area's strong downward slope toward the river also would reduce the apparent height of the proposed mixed-use building relative to the upland buildings constructed on higher ground. As noted above, the proposed retail on Eleventh Avenue and West 57th Street would provide visual interest at street level, positively affecting the pedestrian experience. Overall, the proposed actions would not adversely affect any urban design features of the project site, rezoning area, and study area, and would not result in significant adverse impacts to the experience of the pedestrian.

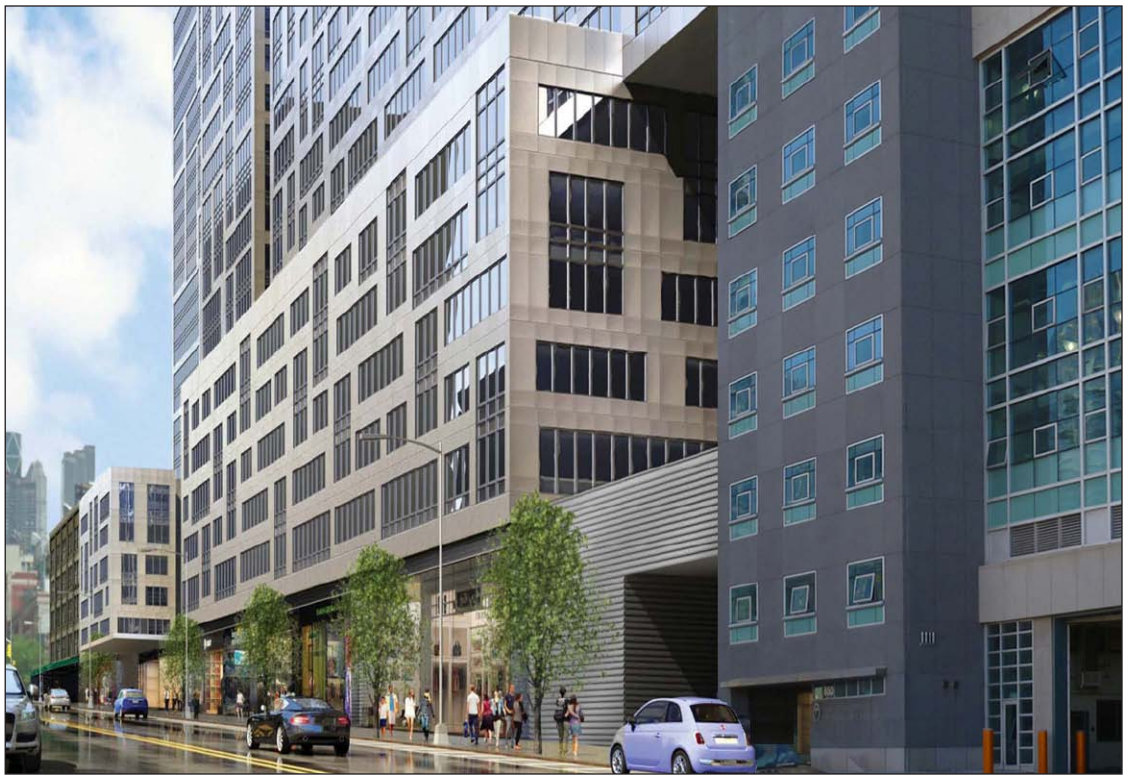
VISUAL RESOURCES

Project Site, Rezoning Area, and Project Block

As described above, there are no visual resources on the project site, rezoning area, or the remainder of the project block. As in the future without the proposed actions, views of the Consolidated Edison Power House from sidewalks on the north side of the project block would be obstructed by the 625 West 57th Street project being developed on the empty block between the project site and the Power House. Views of Hudson River Park, the river itself, and the New



Existing/ No Build Condition



NOTE: For Illustrative Purposes Only

Build Condition

Comparative Views:
Existing, No Build, and Build Conditions
View Southeast from West 57th Street

Figure 8-18

Jersey Palisades would still be available along West 57th Street and the western edge of the block.

Study Area

In the future with the proposed actions, expansive views of the Hudson River and New Jersey would remain from Riverside Park South, Hudson River Park, the elevated portions of Route 9A and Riverside Boulevard, and existing east-west street locations. The view corridor west along West 57th Street to the Hudson River and the New Jersey Palisades would not be obstructed (see **Figure 8-19**). The Consolidated Edison Power House and its tall brick smokestack would remain visible throughout much of the study area, particularly from Riverside Park South and Hudson River Park, the elevated portion of Route 9A north of the project block, and along Eleventh/West End Avenue, with the Power House's smokestack remaining visible from more distant locations. The proposed mixed-use building and projected hotel development in the rezoning area would contribute to the changing visual character of the study area, which has recently undergone substantial redevelopment with modern residential towers, a trend which will continue in the future with or without the proposed actions (see **Figure 8-20** for context).

In summary, the proposed actions would not change urban design features so that the context of a natural or built feature is adversely altered, and would not partially or fully block any significant public views to a visual resource. Therefore, the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to visual resources. ✷



Existing/ No Build Condition



NOTE: For Illustrative Purposes Only

Build Condition

Comparative Views:
Existing, No Build, and Build Conditions
View West from West 57th Street

Figure 8-19



Illustrative view of model looking northeast



NOTE: For Illustrative Purposes Only

Illustrative view of model looking north

Project Context - Architectural Model