ACME FISH EXPANSION
Chapter 7: Urban Design And Visual Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the Proposed Actions' potential effects on urban design and visual resources. As outlined in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Actions would facilitate the development of an approximately 654,300 gross square foot (gsf) commercial/manufacturing building (the "Proposed Development") in the Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn Community District (CD) 1.

Per the 2014 *City Environmental Quality Review* (CEQR) *Technical Manual*, urban design is defined as the total of components – including streets, buildings, open spaces, wind, natural resources, and visual resources—that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space. A visual resource is defined as the connection from the public realm to significant natural or built features, including views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings or groups of buildings, or natural resources. In an urban design and visual resources assessment pursuant to CEQR, one considers whether and how a project or an action may change the visual experience of a pedestrian, focusing on the components of the project or the action that may have the potential to significantly and adversely affect the arrangement, appearance, and functionality of the built and natural environment. An assessment of the potential impacts of the Proposed Actions on urban design and visual resources was prepared in conformance to the *CEQR Technical Manual*. This analysis describes existing conditions and compares conditions in the future without and with the Proposed Actions to determine potential urban design and visual resource impacts. The urban design and visual resources analysis is based on field visits, photography, and computer imaging.

B. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

A detailed assessment found that the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to urban design or visual resources within the primary study area (the Development Site), or in the 400-foot secondary study area. The development facilitated by the Proposed Actions is being built on an existing block, and would not entail any changes to topography, street patterns, street hierarchy, block shapes, or natural features. The proposed building would not negatively alter views in the secondary study area from adjacent publicly-accessible locations, and would not obstruct any view corridors of significant visual resources. Several view corridors would undergo a noticeable transformation in relation to the visual context of the primary study area, with the Proposed Development representing a visible change to the perspective of a pedestrian adjacent to the Development Site. The Proposed Development would alter the visual setting of the primary study area by replacing several low-rise industrial buildings, as well as open storage areas surrounded by metal fencing, with a development that is larger than adjacent low-rise buildings present in the surrounding secondary study area. However, the Proposed Development would not obstruct any views of visual resources, nor would the Proposed Development adversely impact the four view corridors in the secondary study area; rather, the Proposed Development would open up the existing block and generate additional view corridors through the southern portion of the primary study area. The Proposed Development would enhance the pedestrian experience adjacent to the primary study area through the improvement of streetscape and sidewalk conditions, including the introduction of a

new Public Access Area ("PAA"), the elimination of unnecessary curb cuts, and the addition of numerous street trees. Additionally, the Proposed Development would feature two pedestrian pathways, which would improve circulation within the primary study area. As such, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to urban design or visual resources, but is expected to complement and improve the urban design of the surrounding area.

C. METHODOLOGY

In general, an assessment of urban design is needed when a project may have effects on one or more of the elements that contribute to a pedestrian's experience of public space. These elements, the totality of which defines the concept of urban design, are described below:

- *Streets*. The arrangement and orientation of streets define the location and flow of activity in an area, set street views, and create the blocks on which buildings and open spaces are organized. The apportionment of street space between cars, bicycles, transit, and sidewalk areas is critical to making a successful streetscape, as is the careful design of street furniture, grade, materials used, and permanent fixtures, including plantings, street lights, fire hydrants, curb cuts, or newsstands.
- *Buildings*. Buildings support streets. A building's street walls form the most common backdrop in the city for public space. A building's size, shape, setbacks, lot coverage, placement on the zoning lot and block, the orientation of active uses, and pedestrian and vehicular entrances all play major roles in the vitality of the streetscape. The public realm also extends to building façades and rooftops, offering more opportunity to enrich the visual character of an area.
- *Visual Resources*. A visual resource is the connection from the public realm to significant natural or built features, including views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings or groups of buildings, or natural resources.
- *Open Space*. For the purpose of urban design, open space includes public and private areas such as parks, yards, cemeteries, parking lots, and privately owned public space (POPS).
- *Natural Features*. Natural features include vegetation and geologic, topographic, and aquatic features. Rock outcroppings, steep slopes or varied ground elevation, beaches, or wetlands may help define the overall visual character of an area.
- *Wind*. Channelized wind pressure from between tall buildings and down washed wind pressure from parallel tall buildings may cause winds that jeopardize pedestrian safety.

The Proposed Actions would enable development to be constructed that would differ from existing zoning envelopes and could result in physical changes beyond the bulk and form currently permitted as-of-right. This has the potential to change pedestrians' experience of public space. Therefore, it is appropriate to assess the Proposed Actions' potential impacts to urban design and visual resources.

A pedestrian wind condition analysis is not warranted for the Proposed Actions pursuant to *CEQR Technical Manual* methodology. As stated in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, construction of large buildings at locations that experience high wind conditions may result in an exacerbation of wind conditions due to "channelization" or "downwash" effects that may affect pedestrian safety. The need for a wind analysis is based on a number of factors, including whether the location is exposed to high wind conditions, such as along west and northwest-facing waterfronts, as well as the size and orientation of the buildings that are proposed to be constructed. As the Development Site is not located along the waterfront, it is not exposed to high wind conditions. As such, a pedestrian wind condition analysis is not warranted for the Proposed Actions pursuant to *CEQR Technical Manual* methodology.

Study Areas

The study area for the assessment of urban design and visual resources corresponds to the area where the Proposed Actions may influence land use patterns and the built environment and is consistent with that used for the land use analysis. For visual resources, the view corridors within the study area from which such resources are publicly viewable have been identified.

The urban design analysis considers both a primary study area, which is generally coterminous with the boundaries of the Development Site, and a secondary study area, which extends a 400-feet radius from the Development Site's boundaries. Consistent with the secondary study area presented in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the urban design secondary study area extends to include all tax lots with at least 50 percent of their area within the 400-feet radius; where appropriate, the boundaries of the secondary study area have been expanded to include entire blocks. The study areas have been established in accordance with *CEQR Technical Manual* guidance and can be seen in Figure 7-1.

D. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Urban Design

Primary Study Area (Development Site)

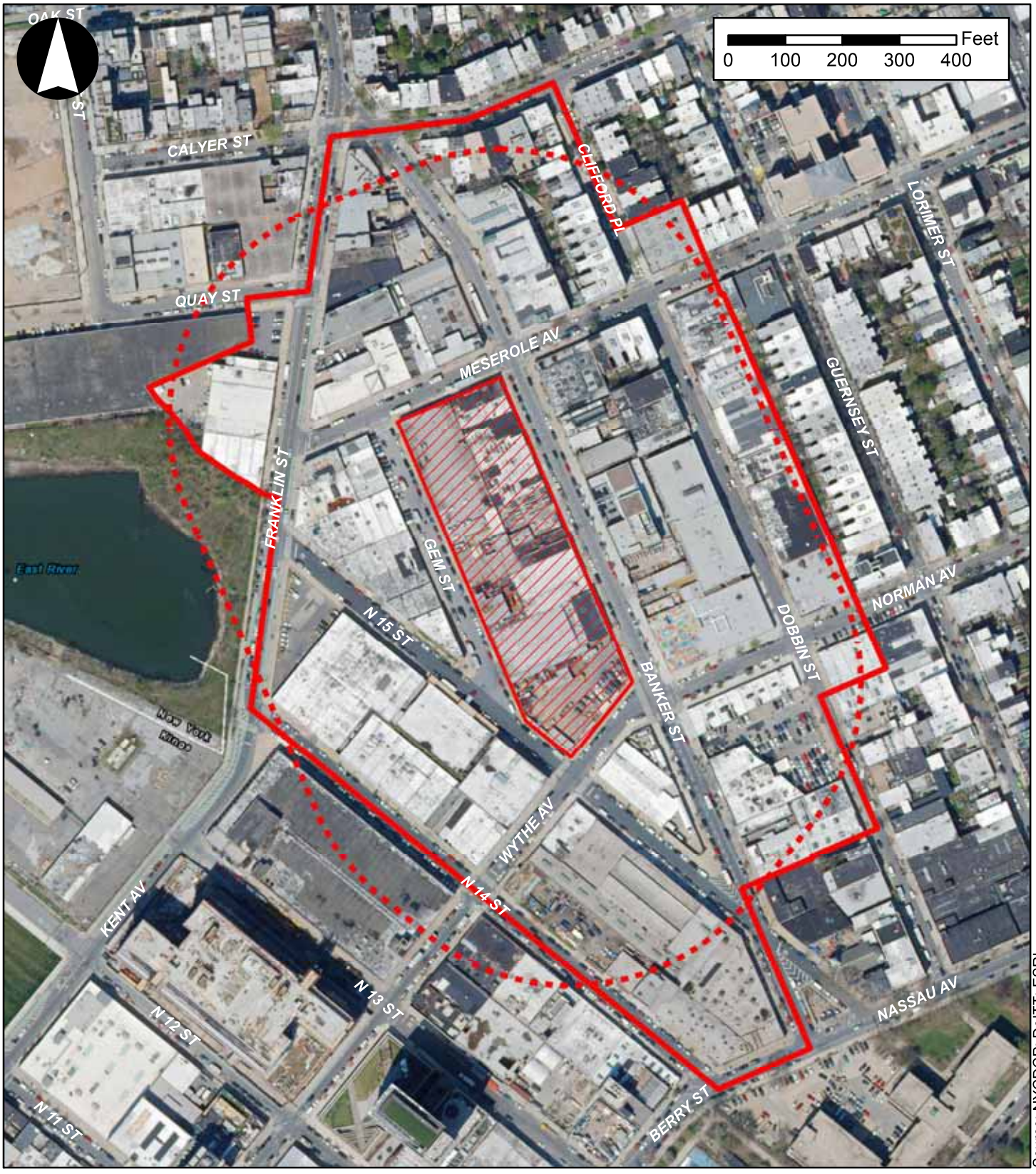
The primary study area is coterminous with the Development Site and consists of Block 2615, Lots 1, 6, 19, 21, 25, 50, and 125 in the Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn CD 1. The Development site totals 116,756 square feet (sf) and is bounded by Banker Street to the east, Wythe Avenue to the south, Gem and North 15th streets to the west, and Meserole Avenue to the north.

BUILDINGS

The primary study area is occupied by multiple industrial buildings, as well as open storage (refer to Figure 7-2 for photo locations and Figures 7-3 and 7-4 for photos of the Primary Study Area). The existing buildings located within the primary study area (described in greater detail below) mostly date from the 1920s and 1930s, but have undergone various alterations since the 1980s.

Lots 1, 21, 25, and 50, comprising the majority of the Development Site's Gem Street frontage, are currently occupied by the Acme Smoked Fish facility. The facility, which was rebuilt in 1966 after a major fire, consists of four interconnected one- and two-story buildings with a total of approximately 72,885 gsf of built floor area. The buildings are predominantly flat-roofed brick and masonry structures built to the lot line; a pitched roof metal structure is located on a rooftop steel platform located on a portion of the Lot 21 building (see photo No. 2 in Figure 7-3). Mechanical equipment is also visible on portions of the buildings' roofs. The existing buildings have minimal fenestration, and the variety of brick colors and sizes indicate that previous windows and doors have been bricked over; the only windows are located on the second story of the Lot 25 building's southern and eastern façades. Other notable features of the existing Acme Smoked Fish facility buildings are the multiple metal loading gates and metal entry doors, the presence of metal piping/exterior utilities, utilitarian lighting on the building façades, and graffiti art on the buildings' Banker Street frontage. Two signs advertising Acme Smoked Fish are located on the Lot 1 building (see photo No. 3 in Figure 7-3).

Urban Design Study Area

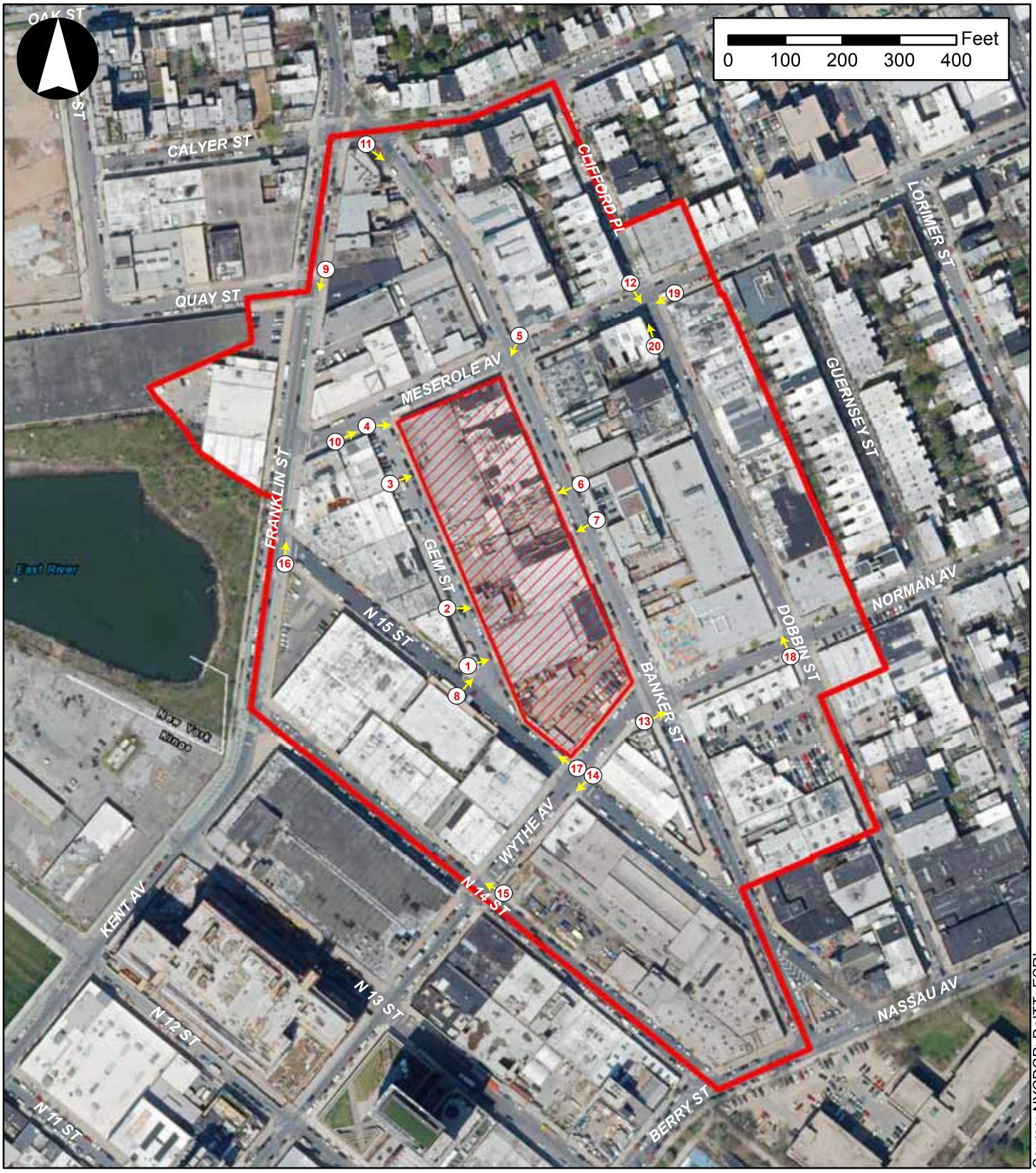


Source: NYCDCP; DoITT; ESRI

Legend

Primary Study Area (Development Site) | 400-Foot Radius | Secondary Study Area

Urban Design Study Area - Photo Location Map



Source: NYCDCP; DoITT; ESRI

Legend

Primary Study Area (Development Site) | Secondary Study Area | ① Photo Locations



1. Looking northeast from Gem Street.



2. Looking northeast from Gem Street.



3. Looking northeast from Gem Street.



4. Looking southeast from the southwestern corner of the intersection of Gem Street and Meserole Avenue.



5. Looking southwest from the northeastern corner of the intersection of Banker Street and Meserole Avenue.



6. Looking west from Banker Street.



7. Looking west from Banker Street.



8. Looking north from the intersection of Gem Street and North 15th Street.

Acme Fish Expansion

Figure 7-4
Primary Study Area - Development Site

Lot 6 (at the southwest corner of Meserole Avenue and Banker Street) contains ABC Stone, a stone supplier occupying two interconnected flat-roofed buildings totaling approximately 21,500 gsf, which is currently in the process of moving out and is expected to relocate within the area. At the northeast corner of the lot is a two-story full lot coverage brick building featuring two horizontal window bands and a vertical sign (see photo No. 5 in Figure 7-4). Surrounding the two-story building to its south and west is a one-story brick building that is built to the lot line. Along Banker Street, the bottom half of the façade is painted grey, with multi-paned windows above. Metal loading gates and metal entry doors are located on the buildings' Meserole Avenue and Banker Street frontages. The southern end of the lot is used predominantly for open storage, and a one-story pitched roof structure is located away from the lot line at the southwestern corner of the lot. As a solid metal fence lines the open area's Banker Street lot line, the setback structure is only partially visible to the public when the fence gate is open (see photo No. 6 in Figure 7-4).

Directly south of Lot 6, Lot 19 is currently occupied by a vacant building comprising approximately 3,800 gsf. The vacant structure consists of two interconnected one-story full lot coverage brick buildings; the northern building is approximately 17 feet in height, while the southern building is approximately 25 feet in height. The northern building includes windows and a door which were constructed in the space of a former metal loading gate; an additional door is located directly north of this building entry. The southern building features a metal loading gate, a metal door, the metal structure of a former awning, and utilitarian lighting (see photo No. 7 in Figure 7-4).

The southern end of the Development Site, Lot 125, is currently used as a field office and open storage for Corzo Contracting Company, a utility construction company, which intends to relocate within New York City. The lot is surrounded by metal fencing and features advertising and graffiti art (see photo No. 8 in Figure 7-4). A large metal entry gate is located on Banker Street. While a trailer and two frame sheds are located on the lot, they are not visible to the public beyond the lot line fence.

STREETS & STREETSCAPE

The Development Site's slightly irregular block shape and size (Block 2615 is larger than a standard New York City block) is due to its location at the intersection of two street grid systems: Gem and Banker Street run parallel to one another and perpendicular to Meserole Avenue, consistent with the blocks to the east; North 15th Street and Wythe Avenue are perpendicular, and consistent with the street grid to the southwest. As a result of their width and close proximity to East River State Park and McCarren Park, most streets in the immediate vicinity of the Development Site carry local vehicular traffic. The streets adjacent to the Development Site are one-way thoroughfares with parking lanes on both sides of the street. With the exception of Banker Street, which has a width of 70 feet, the remaining streets bordering the Development Site have mapped widths of 60 feet. Additionally, Banker Street is the only street bordering the Development Site with a bike lane, which is comprised of a single, one-way northbound travel lane.

All of the streets bordering the Development Site are flanked by concrete sidewalks: Along Meserole Avenue, sidewalk widths range from 14' to 14'8", along Banker Street, the sidewalk width is 14'10", along Wythe Avenue, the sidewalk width is 14', along North 15th Street, the sidewalk width is 14'5", and along Gem Street, sidewalk widths range from 13' to 15'10". Due to the presence of multiple loading gates on the Development Site buildings, there is a large number of curb cuts in the immediate vicinity of the Development Site. One approximately 17-foot curb cut is located along the Development Site's Meserole Avenue frontage, six curb cuts are located along the Development Site's Banker Street frontage (ranging in width from approximately nine to 56 feet), one approximately 49-foot curb cut is located along the Development Site's Wythe Avenue frontage, and two curb cuts (41 and 43 feet) are located along the Development Site's Gem Street frontage; there are no curb cuts located along the Development Site's

North 15th Street frontage. Other streetscape elements include four standard cobrahead streetlights, bollards, a CitiBike station on the North 15th Street sidewalk, multiple fire hydrants, utility poles (along Banker Street), and standard parking and street signage. Pallets with products and equipment are occasionally temporarily located on the Banker Street and Gem Street sidewalks. Planters and a marble bench are also located adjacent to the ABC Stone frontage along Banker Street (see photo No. 5 in Figure 7-4). There are six street trees (two on Meserole Avenue and four on Banker Street) located on the sidewalks adjoining the Development Site.

NATURAL FEATURES & OPEN SPACE

The topography of the area surrounding the Development Site is generally flat, and, other than the open storage areas on Lots 6 and 125, there are no natural features or open areas located on the Development Site.

Secondary Study Area (400-Feet Radius)

BUILDINGS

As detailed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the predominant land use in the secondary study area is light industrial/manufacturing (refer to Figure 2-1 "Land Use Map"). The secondary study area also includes several commercial/office uses, as well as a pocket of residential uses to the northeast of the Development Site. Current land uses in the 400-foot study area reflect both longstanding manufacturing and industrial buildings (some of which have been converted to commercial/office uses). Since the 2005 Greenpoint-Williamsburg Rezoning was implemented, many former industrial/manufacturing buildings in the secondary study area have been converted to commercial/office uses; one former industrial loft building (at the northeast corner of Meserole Avenue and Banker Street) has been converted to residential uses. Though the greater Greenpoint neighborhood has seen significant changes in the past ten years, there has been only one new building developed within the secondary study area since 2000: a four-story residential building located at 114 Calyer Street, which was constructed in 2005.

As shown in Figures 7-5 and 7-6, the majority of buildings in the secondary study area are built to the lot lines, creating continuous street walls throughout the study area. The secondary study area also features several properties containing surface parking lots and storage yards enclosed with fencing. The fencing enclosing parking lots and storage yards, where present, offers varying levels of transparency; where fencing is not transparent, the streetwall created by adjacent buildings is reinforced, and where fencing is fully or semi-transparent, the continuity of the streetwall created by adjacent buildings is disrupted and new sight lines are created. As shown in Figure 7-7, buildings within the secondary study area are typically one- to two-stories tall, with buildings of up to five stories located to the northeast of the Development Site; in feet, building heights in the secondary study area range from a minimum of approximately 11 feet to a maximum of approximately 53 feet. As shown in Figure 7-8, taller buildings are also generally the buildings with the highest built density in the secondary study area. The older industrial/manufacturing buildings tend to be built from either brick or cinder block, with more recently renovated buildings featuring glass windows in place of the loading area garage doors commonly found on industrial/manufacturing buildings in the secondary study area.

STREETS & STREETSCAPE

As noted above, the Development Site is located at the intersection of two street grid systems; as a result, the blocks of the secondary study area do not follow a cohesive street grid system, and many of the blocks are irregularly shaped. The majority of streets in the secondary study area are narrow (less than 75 feet



9. Looking southwest from the northeastern corner of the intersection of Franklin Street and Quay Street.



10. Looking east near the southwestern corner of the intersection of Meserole Avenue and Gem Street.



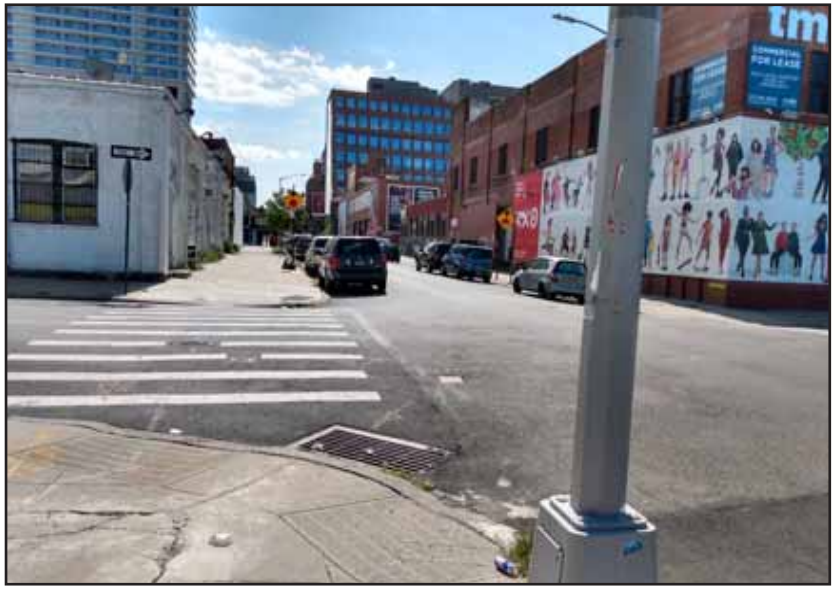
11. Looking southeast from the northwestern corner of the intersection of Calyer Street and Banker Street.



12. Looking south from the northwestern corner of the intersection of Clifford Place/Dobbin Street and Meserole Avenue.



13. Looking northeast from the southwestern corner of the intersection of Norman Avenue/Wythe Avenue and Banker Street.



14. Looking southwest from the northeastern corner of the intersection of Wythe Avenue and North 15th Street.

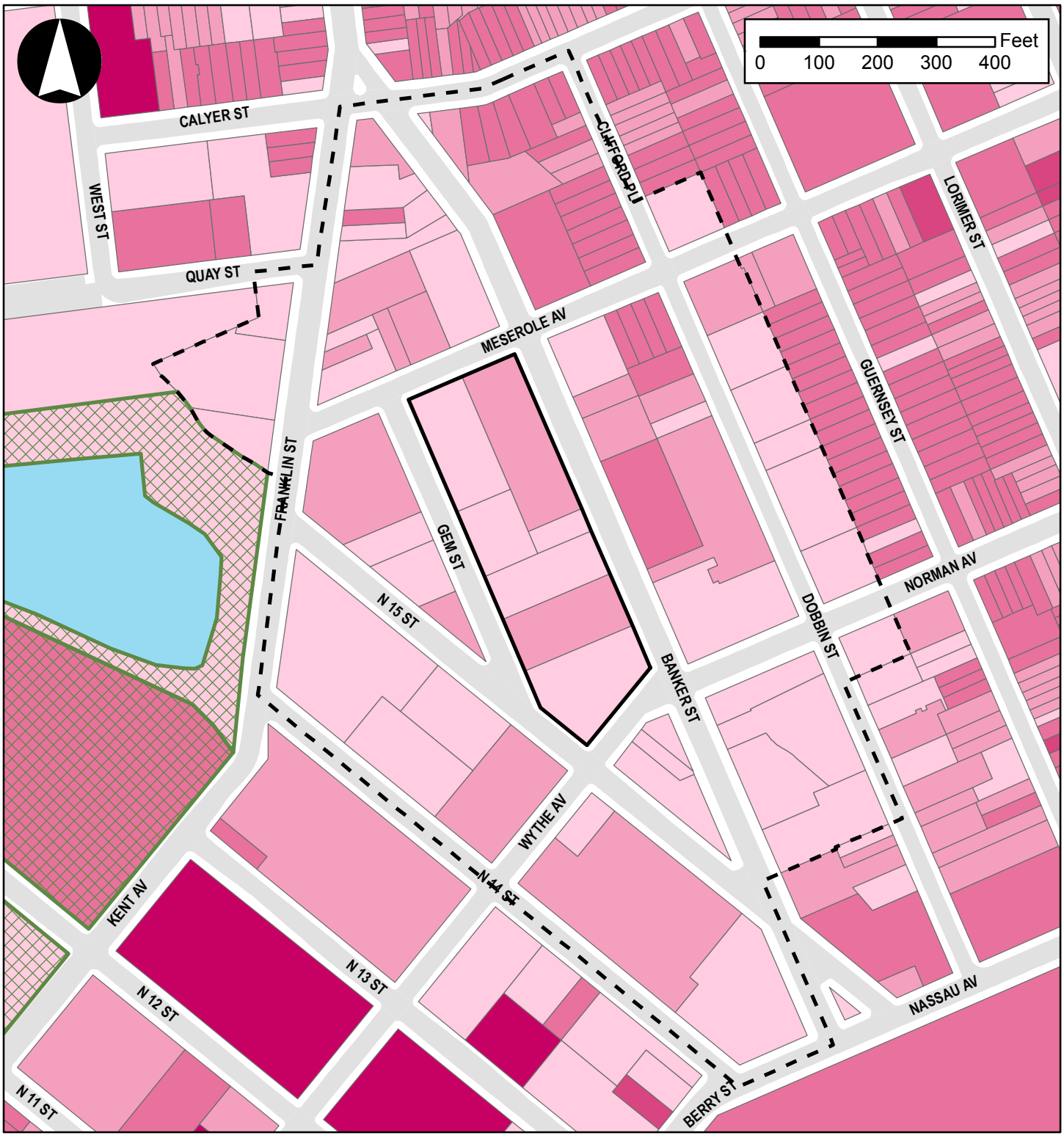


15. Looking northwest from the northeastern corner of the intersection of Wythe Avenue and North 14th Street.



16. Looking north from the southeastern corner of the intersection of Franklin Street and North 15th Street.

Existing Building Heights



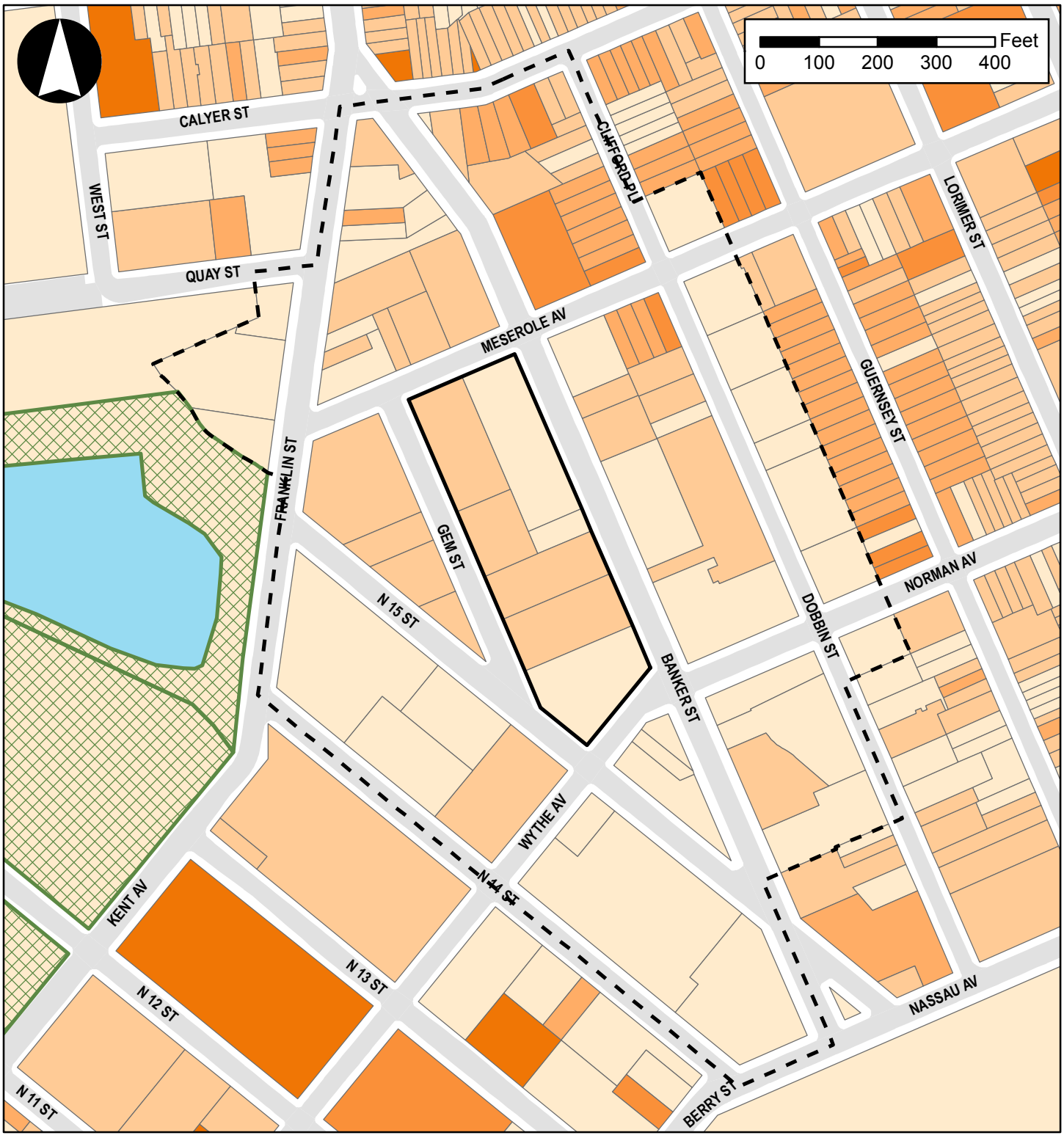
Legend

- Primary Study Area (Development Site)
- Secondary Study Area

Number of Floors

- 1 Story
- 2 Stories
- 3-4 Stories
- 5-6 Stories
- More than 6 Stories
- Future Bushwick Inlet Park

Existing Building Density



Legend

- Primary Study Area (Development Site)
- Secondary Study Area

Built FAR

- 1 FAR
- 2 FAR
- 3 FAR
- 4 FAR
- More than 4 FAR
- Future Bushwick Inlet Park

in width), one-way thoroughfares that carry local traffic with parallel parking lanes on both sides of the street. However, North 14th Street (carrying eastbound and westbound traffic), Franklin Street (carrying northbound and southbound traffic), and Norman Avenue (carrying eastbound and westbound traffic) are two-way streets, which contain one travel lane in each direction plus curbside parking. Within the secondary study area, curbside truck loading zones are present along the east sides of both Banker Street and Dobbin Street; on Banker Street, truck loading is in effect Monday to Friday 6AM to 6PM and on Dobbin Street, truck loading is in effect Monday to Friday 7AM to 1PM. Franklin Street also contains two bike lanes and is a designated local truck route. Figure 7-9 shows local streets and streetscapes in the secondary study area. As shown in the figure, all of the streets in the 400-feet study area are flanked by concrete sidewalks with varied widths. Streetscape elements include street trees (generally located in the vicinity of residential buildings and recent building renovations or conversions), standard cobrahead street lights, standard parking and street signage, utility poles and lines (found along Banker Street), and a CitiBike station (at the northwest corner of Banker Street and Meserole Avenue). Sidewalks adjacent to industrial and former industrial buildings are generally characterized by the presence of multiple large curb cuts. Tables and chairs are located along the northern section of the Norman Avenue sidewalk, east of Banker Street, adjacent to an existing business (see photo No. 13 in Figure 7-6).

NATURAL FEATURES & OPEN SPACE

The topography of the secondary study area is generally flat, with a gradual slope upward from the Bushwick Inlet waterfront to the inland blocks. Open spaces in the secondary study area are limited to surface parking lots enclosed with fencing. It should be noted that, while there are no public open space resources located within the secondary study area, the future Bushwick Inlet Park is located adjacent to the secondary study area's western boundary (Franklin Street and Block 2590). When complete, Bushwick Inlet Park will comprise a total of 27.3 acres and span five and a half blocks along the East River waterfront between North 9th Street (south) and Quay Street (north). In the future, when all phases of Bushwick Inlet Park are complete and operational, the Development Site will be located one block to the east of the public open space's Franklin Street frontage where it will border Bushwick Inlet.

Visual Resources

Primary Study Area (Development Site)

There are no visual resources located within the primary study area. Obstructed views of the Manhattan skyline are visible from vantages located to the west of the Development Site's northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest corners, including partial views of One World Trade Center (see photo No. 19 in Figure 7-9) and the Empire State Building (see photo No. 17 in Figure 7-9). Despite the primary study area being located just one block from the East River, trees and overgrown vegetation along the western side of Franklin Street block views of the East River waterfront from the primary study area and surrounding streets. These views may change with the design of future phases of Bushwick Inlet Park, although no specific design elements of the future open space are known at this time, and the timing of the construction and opening of the planned open space is also currently unknown.

Secondary Study Area (400-Feet Radius)

Obstructed views of the Manhattan skyline are visible from many vantages looking west within the secondary study area. McCarren Park (located along the secondary study area's southern border) is partially visible along portions of North 14th, North 15th, and Banker streets, as well as Nassau Avenue. As noted above, views of the East River waterfront are currently obstructed by trees and overgrown



17. Looking northwest from the northeastern corner of the intersection of Wythe Avenue and North 15th Street.



18. Looking north from the southwestern corner of the intersection of Norman Avenue and Dobbin Street.



19. Looking southwest from the southeast corner of the intersection of Meserole Avenue and Banker Street.



20. Looking north near the intersection of Meserole Avenue and Dobbin Street/Clifford Place.

vegetation along the western side of Franklin Street. The Williamsburg Bridge is visible from the intersection of North 14th Street and Kent Avenue.

E. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS (NO-ACTION CONDITION)

Urban Design

Primary Study Area (Development Site)

As detailed in Chapter 1, "Project Description," in the future without the Proposed Actions, without a new state-of-the-art purpose-built facility for its operations, it is assumed that Acme Smoked Fish would relocate. As such, for analysis purposes, it is assumed that in absence of the Proposed Actions Acme Smoked Fish would vacate its buildings on the Development Site (Block 2615, Lots 1, 21, 25, and 50). Lot 6, which is currently occupied by ABC Stone, is also expected to be vacated in the No-Action condition, as the business is currently in the process of moving out. Based on existing and anticipated real estate market trends, the existing structures and site conditions, and uses allowed by existing zoning, it is expected that those vacated buildings on Lots 1, 6, 21, 25, and 50 of the Development Site would be renovated, re-purposed, and re-occupied by a mix of eating/drinking/entertainment establishments, creative office and warehouse uses. As such, the existing built form of a majority of the Development Site would be nominally altered in the No-Action condition. In addition, the vacant building on Lot 19 is assumed to be re-occupied by restaurant use in the No-Action condition. Finally, the No-Action condition assumes that Lot 125, which currently accommodates parking and open storage, would be redeveloped with a new three-story commercial building with distillery, office, dance studio, and restaurant uses (refer to Figure 1-8 "No-Action RWCDS Illustrative Massing" and Figure 1-9 "No-Action RWCDS Illustrative Site Plan" in Chapter 1 "Project Description").[1] Figures 7-12 through 7-17 provide illustrative views of the Development Site as it exists in its current state and as it would likely appear under the No-Action condition; Figure 7-11 provides a base map to demonstrate the photo locations of the illustrative views provided in Figures 7-12 through 7-16. As illustrated in these figures, the built form of the Development Site in the No-Action condition would largely remain similar to the existing conditions; as illustrated in the figures, the new three-story commercial building located on Lot 125 would alter the visual setting of the southern portion of the Development Site.

Overall, the No-Action condition for the Development Site is assumed to consist of a total of 169,485 gross square feet (gsf), comprised of approximately 35,225 gsf of restaurant/entertainment uses, 66,750 gsf of creative office space, 28,610 gsf of warehousing spaces, and 17,500 gsf of industrial space (a distillery), as well as an estimated 21,400 gsf of accessory parking (107 spaces).

Secondary Study Area (400-Feet Radius)

BUILDINGS

As detailed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," four projects are anticipated to be completed in the 400-feet study area in the future without the Proposed Actions, including one new development, two expansions of existing buildings, and one reoccupation of an existing building. Directly

[1] Based on a prior permit application that was filed with the Department of Buildings in 2015 (https://newyorkyimby.com/2015/10/permits-filed-14-wythe-avenue-greenpoint-distillery.html)

west of the Development Site, a seven-story mixed-use building is expected to be completed at 12 Franklin Street (on the northern portion of the block bounded by Meserole Avenue and Gem, North 15th, and Franklin streets). The planned development would replace the existing one- and two-story buildings that currently occupy the site with a mix of retail, office, and light industrial uses, as well as below-grade accessory parking.

Two existing buildings are currently being expanded as-of-right in the secondary study area. Directly east of the Development Site, the expansion of an existing industrial building at 193 Banker Street is currently underway. Once completed, the building would rise three stories and feature a consistent streetwall along the entirety of the site's Banker Street frontage. One block north of the Development Site, the vertical expansion of an existing two-story industrial building, which is currently underway, is expected to be completed in the No-Action condition. Once completed, the building would rise five stories and include a mix of industrial and community facility uses, in addition to accessory parking.

Lastly, along the southern boundary of the secondary study area, the existing one-story building at 1 Nassau Avenue is expected to be tenanted by an indoor rock climbing gym. No other alterations to existing buildings located within the secondary study area are known at this time, and, as such, the existing built form of the secondary study area is anticipated to remain.

STREETS & STREETSCAPE

In the future without the Proposed Actions, it is anticipated that street trees would be planted around new development sites within the 400-foot study area, in keeping with City policy. In addition, with the introduction of new active retail uses at 12 Franklin Street and 1 Nassau Avenue, the adjacent streetscapes are expected to experience increased pedestrian-oriented activity.

NATURAL FEATURES & OPEN SPACE

No changes to the secondary study area's natural features or open space are anticipated in the future without the Proposed Actions. As detailed above, the future Bushwick Inlet Park, which the City is developing as a new public open space, is located adjacent to the western boundary of the secondary study area. The completion date for the future phase of Bushwick Inlet Park located nearest to the Development Site is unknown at this time.

Visual Resources

Primary Study Area (Development Site)

There are no visual resources within the primary study area itself, and no new visual resources are expected to be introduced within the primary study area in the absence of the Proposed Actions.

Secondary Study Area (400-Feet Radius)

No changes to visual resources are anticipated within the secondary study in the 2024 future without the Proposed Actions.

F. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTIONS (WITH-ACTION CONDITION)

As outlined in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Applicant seeks a zoning map amendment and a Large-Scale General Development (LSGD) special permit (the "Proposed Actions"). The Proposed Actions would facilitate a new development with approximately 654,300 gsf, comprised of (i) a new and improved approximately 109,300 gsf Acme Smoked Fish processing facility, and (ii) approximately 545,000 gsf of commercial office and retail space (including parking/loading/bike storage spaces), as well as partially covered open space areas totaling approximately 21,403 sf, of which approximately 12,880 sf would be open to the sky and approximately 8,523 sf would be partially covered. In the 2024 future with the Proposed Actions, the requested zoning map amendment and the LSGD special permit would be approved, and the Proposed Development would be completed and occupied. As discussed in detail in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Actions are intended to facilitate a mix of commercial and industrial/manufacturing land uses on the Development Site at a density that preserves the light industrial and manufacturing character of the surrounding Greenpoint neighborhood while allowing a mix of other complementary uses that are permitted within the proposed M1-5 zoning district.

Urban Design

Primary Study Area (Development Site)

BUILDINGS

The primary study area would be improved with a new mixed-use development with approximately 654,300 gsf on the Development Site, comprised of (i) a new and improved approximately 109,300 gsf Acme Smoked Fish processing facility, and (ii) approximately 545,000 gsf of commercial office and retail space (including parking/loading/bike storage spaces). The Acme Smoked Fish processing facility would be located on Lot 6, while the commercial building would be located on Lots 1, 19, 21, 25, 50, and 125. A total of six loading berths would be provided for the Proposed Development – three for Acme Smoked Fish, with access from Meserole Avenue (two berths) and Banker Street (one berth), and three for the commercial building, with access from Banker Street (refer to Figure 1-6 "Proposed Development - Preliminary Ground Floor Plan" in Chapter 1 "Project Description").

The Acme Smoked Fish processing facility would contain four stories with a maximum building height of approximately 74 feet to the building roofline[2] (refer to Figure 1-4 "Proposed Development Preliminary Section: Setback and Sky Exposure Plane" and Figure 1-5 "Proposed Development Preliminary Rendering - Southwest Corner Looking Northeast" in Chapter 1 "Project Description"). There would be a mechanical metal louver screen on the roof that is 25 feet high. The Acme Smoked Fish facility would be located on the northeastern portion of the block, fronting on Meserole Avenue and Banker Street. The entrance of the building would be on Banker Street near the corner of Meserole Avenue. The raw materials would be delivered through two loading berths on Meserole Avenue (accessible via a single curb-cut); organic waste would be removed through a third loading berth on Banker Street (accessible via a single curb-cut).

[2] It should be noted that, although the Acme Smoked Fish processing facility would reach a roofline height of approximately 74 feet, plus a mechanical louver screen above, the requested LSGD special permit would permit a maximum building height envelope of approximately 104 feet (including mechanical bulkhead). As such, this maximum permitted height will be used for CEQR analysis purposes throughout this document, unless otherwise noted.

The commercial building, which would contain office and retail uses and occupy the remainder of the block, would consist of nine stories and reach a maximum building height envelope of approximately 178.5 feet to the building roofline[3]. There would be a mechanical bulkhead and mechanical equipment screen on the commercial building's roof that would be 25 feet tall (refer to Figure 1-4 "Proposed Development Preliminary Section: Setback and Sky Exposure Plane" and Figure 1-5 "Proposed Development Preliminary Rendering - Southwest Corner Looking Northeast" in Chapter 1 "Project Description"). The Proposed Development would provide approximately 150 off-street accessory parking spaces on the ground level of the commercial building, with curb-cut access via Gem Street. The commercial building would feature three additional loading berths located on Banker Street (accessible via two curb-cuts). The Proposed Development would be built in accordance with the requested LSGD special permit.

The Proposed Development would also include partially covered open space areas at the southern portion of the Development Site, totaling approximately 21,403 sf of Public Access Area ("PAA"), of which approximately 12,880 sf would be open to the sky and approximately 8,523 sf would be partially covered (refer to Figure 1-7 "Proposed Development - Landscape Ground Floor Plan" in Chapter 1 "Project Description"). Additionally, separate from the PAA, there would be approximately 5,775 sf of open areas adjacent to the retail establishments on the Development Site. As illustrated in Figures 7-14 through 7-17, the proposed PAA of the Proposed Development, occupying four street frontages (Banker Street, Wythe Avenue, North 15th Street, and Gem Street) would be planted with street trees and feature differing levels of plantings establishing a vertical hierarchy of landscaped integration within the Development Site and the adjoining neighborhood. Within the PAA, the open areas would include a variety of seating options throughout the site, including accessible companion seating, moveable tables and chairs, benches, and wooden platforms with sculptural seating.

As illustrated in Figures 7-10a and 7-10b, the boxy massing of the Proposed Development, as well as its overall design principles, are intended to emulate the form and style of the many surrounding warehouse buildings that dominate and inform the built character of the Greenpoint neighborhood. The commercial building's façade would be articulated in several ways. As illustrated in Figures 7-12, 7-14, 7-16, and 7-17, the contextual use of brick and masonry materials would distinguish the lower floors of the commercial building from the upper floors, which would make use of a combination of steel and glass materials. From grade, the brick vernacular base engages the ground, the metal industrial commercial segment then rests above the brick portions, and the modern intervention of the glass volume floats above. The commercial office entrance, situated in a modern transparent double height lobby featuring glass walls and roof, would be located on Gem Street. The goal of the façade articulation design is to break down the mass and scale by aggregating the height at nine stories in the center of the building, decreasing the floor heights at five stories on Gem Street and Meserole Avenue, two and six stories on Banker Street, and two and six stories on Wythe Avenue. The terrace on the roof of the building and the terraces on the setbacks provided at varying roof heights on all façades will offer a visual connection between street and building levels as well as views towards the planned future phases of Bushwick Inlet Park. As illustrated in Figures 7-12 and 7-13, the façade of the new Acme Smoked Fish facility, in keeping with its industrial nature and the industrial context of the surrounding neighborhood, would feature a variation of dark grey textured insulated metal paneling. The simplicity of the façade would allow for an opportunity for the future application of artwork on the façade of the Acme Smoked Fish facility.

[3] It should be noted that, although the commercial/retail component of the Proposed Development would reach a roofline height of approximately 172.5 feet, plus a mechanical bulkhead above, the requested LSGD special permit would permit a maximum building height envelope of approximately 178.5 feet to the roofline. As such, this maximum permitted height will be used for CEQR analysis purposes throughout this document, unless otherwise noted.



FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Source: Gensler Architect

Acme Fish Expansion

Figure 7-10a

Proposed Development Illustrative Rendering - Southwest Corner Looking Northeast



FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Source: Gensler Architect

Acme Fish Expansion

Figure 7-10b

Proposed Development Illustrative Rendering - Southeast Corner Looking Northwest

As discussed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," as the Development Site is located within a 100-year flood zone, with a Base Flood Elevation of approximately 11 feet (NAVD88), the Proposed Development has been designed to incorporate flood mitigation measures with wet and dry flood-proofing strategies, as is mandated by the New York City Building Code requirements for flood resistant construction. The entrances to the building, the parking garage, and all loading berths would be wet flood-proofed. The ground floor of the Proposed Development would be raised one foot above the existing flood zone, to approximately 12 feet (NAVD88). All of the Proposed Development's mechanical systems would be located above the floodplain to ensure that these areas are protected from floodwaters. The flood mitigation measures incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development would also help to protect against rising sea levels. The Proposed Development would be designed and constructed in accordance with all applicable City and State flooding and erosion regulations, including New York City Administrative Code, Title 28, Section 104.9 ("Coastal Zones and Water-Sensitive Inland Zones").

STREETS & STREETSCAPE

The Proposed Actions and Proposed Development would alter the streetscape surrounding the primary study area by introducing active pedestrian-oriented ground floor uses and disrupting the current streetwall and fencing that outlines the primary study area through the introduction of new view corridors that would transect the southern portion of the primary study area. The Proposed Actions and Proposed Development would not alter the configuration of the existing block; rather, the Proposed Development, through the introduction of an irregular streetwall, would open up the existing block. The approval of the LSGD special permit would result in a safe and pleasant streetscape. The adjacent sidewalks would be improved in conjunction with the Proposed Development, and 10 unnecessary curb cuts would be eliminated: one curb cut located along Meserole Avenue, six curb cuts located along Banker Street, one curb cut located along Wythe Avenue, and two curb cuts located along Gem Street. The Proposed Development would introduce five new curb cuts: one 25-foot curb cut located along Gem Street, one 27-foot curb cut located along Meserole Avenue, and three curb cuts (two measuring 15 feet and one measuring 25 feet) located along Banker Street (refer to Figure 1-6 "Proposed Development-Preliminary Ground Floor Plan" in Chapter 1 "Project Description"). It is anticipated that new street trees would be provided on the sidewalks surrounding the primary study area, in accordance with zoning requirements. Additionally, the ground-floor retail spaces would be glazed with transparent materials creating active, continuous street walls, helping to enhance the pedestrian experience surrounding the primary study area.

As illustrated in Figures 7-14 through 7-17, at the street level, the Proposed Development's architectural and landscape design features would address and enhance the pedestrian experience. The Proposed Development would feature two pedestrian pathways, with textured and patterned stone pavers, which would be partially covered by the Proposed Development (refer to Figure 1-7 "Proposed Development - Landscape Ground Floor Plan" in Chapter 1 "Project Description"). The main pedestrian pathway would extend north-south from Wythe Avenue to the mid-block of the Development Site, and the second pedestrian pathway, under the commercial building, would extend east-west from Banker Street to Gem Street. Along Banker Street, Wythe Avenue, and North 15th Street the Proposed Development would step back toward the north providing an open to the sky landscaped area. The main pedestrian pathway would begin at Wythe Avenue and proceed from the uncovered portion of the PAA to the covered portion of the PAA and the east-west connection. Both proposed pedestrian pathways would be flanked by ground level retail frontage (e.g. restaurants with cafés) to promote activity and security. The open areas adjacent to the retail establishments, which are separate from the PAA, can be accessed from these establishments and provide furnishings for sitting and dining. The proposed furnishings will include dining tables, chairs, outdoor sofas, and lounge chair seating.

As illustrated in Figure 7-14, the façades of the retail spaces are expected to be a combination of vernacular materials, including rustic brick along with black metal paneling and clear glass recessed storefronts. The Proposed Development's partially covered open areas at the southern portion of the Development Site (totaling approximately 21,403 sf of PAA, of which approximately 12,880 sf would be open to the sky and approximately 8,523 sf would be partially covered) are anticipated to contain textured and patterned pavers, featuring outdoor seating over gently elevated wood decking. Planter walls and benches would be provided, comprised of a combination of tactile concrete, metal, and wood. There are expected to be seating alcoves and setbacks along the Development Site's property line to establish a variety of seating opportunities, including social and accessible companion seating (refer to Figure 1-7 "Proposed Development - Landscape Ground Floor Plan" in Chapter 1 "Project Description"). Adjacent to the office building's main lobby, a planter along Gem Street would sweep back and provide opportunities for public artwork, which would entice pedestrians from the adjoining street through into the partially covered open areas. Along the retail storefronts' edge along Gem Street, there would be an elevated outdoor seating area with vegetated buffers to create visual interest. The visual and physical connectivity between the intersection of Banker Street and Wythe Avenue and Gem street would be created by the presence of the partially covered open areas with varying angled retail walls, which would provide a dynamic experience to pedestrians along these three street frontages by generating additional view corridors through the existing block.

NATURAL FEATURES & OPEN SPACE

As discussed above, the Proposed Development would introduce new partially covered open areas at the southern portion of the Development Site, totaling approximately 21,403 sf, of which approximately 12,880 sf would be open to the sky and approximately 8,523 sf would be partially covered. While these private open areas would be partially landscaped, they would not introduce any unique natural features to the primary study area.

Secondary Study Area (400-Feet Radius)

BUILDINGS

Within the 400-feet secondary study area, it is anticipated that four projects would be completed by the 2024 analysis year, including one new development, two expansions of existing buildings, and one reoccupation of an existing building. There are no other developments planned within the secondary study area that are expected to be completed by the 2024 analysis year.

STREETS & STREETSCAPE

The Proposed Actions would not alter any street patterns, street hierarchies, streetscape arrangements, or block forms in the secondary study area.

NATURAL FEATURES & OPEN SPACE

The Proposed Actions would not result in changes to the secondary study area's natural features or open space.

Visual Resources

Primary Study Area (Development Site)

In the future with the Proposed Actions, construction of the Proposed Development would not obstruct any view corridors or alter any visual resources in the primary study area, as the new development would occur on an existing block that contains no visual resources, and no new visual resources are expected to be introduced within the primary study area as a result of the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Development would introduce an irregular streetwall, which would serve to open up the existing block and generate additional view corridors through the southern portion of the primary study area. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impacts on visual resources.

Secondary Study Area (400-Feet Radius)

The Proposed Actions are site-specific, and would not alter building uses, bulks, or arrangements in the surrounding area, or result in any changes to streets, blocks, topography, open spaces, or natural features in the secondary study area under With-Action conditions. As discussed in greater detail in the Assessment section below, views of the Manhattan skyline and the East River waterfront would not be completely obstructed by the Proposed Development from streets and sidewalks facing west in the secondary study area. Additionally, views of the Williamsburg Bridge from the intersection of North 14th Street and Kent Avenue would not be affected by the Proposed Actions. As such, no changes to visual resources are anticipated in the 400-foot secondary study area as a result of the Proposed Actions.

Assessment

The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse urban design or visual resource impacts in the primary study area or the surrounding secondary study area. Although the Proposed Development would represent a significant change for the primary and secondary study areas, the Proposed Actions would not result in a significant adverse impact to urban design or visual resources. The Proposed Development in the primary study area would be constructed on an existing block and would not entail any changes to topography, street patterns, street hierarchy, block shapes, or natural features in the primary or secondary study areas. Additionally, the Proposed Actions would not create land uses nor structures that would be substantially incompatible with the existing and emerging character of the surrounding Greenpoint neighborhood.

As described above, although much of the secondary study area consists of low-rise buildings, the built context of the secondary study area and the larger Greenpoint neighborhood has been evolving in recent years with a trend toward taller, mixed-use development projects. Multiple mid- and high-rise buildings exist or are planned near the primary study area. In the secondary study area, a seven-story (110 feet tall) mixed-use building is planned at 12 Franklin Street; in the larger Greenpoint neighborhood, the eight-story (135 feet tall) commercial building at 25 Kent Avenue and the 22-story (250 feet tall) William Vale hotel at 111 North 12th Street are each located three blocks to the south of the primary study area. These existing and planned No-Action developments are visible from various vantage points from the primary study area and from within the secondary study area. These developments are evidence of the already changing urban context of the secondary study area and the surrounding Greenpoint neighborhood.

The Proposed Actions would result in the development of a mixed-use development consisting of one building comprised of two components: (1) a new Acme Smoked Fish processing facility containing four

stories with a building height of approximately 74 feet to the roofline[4] and (2) a new commercial building containing nine stories with a maximum building height envelope of approximately 178.5 feet to the roofline[5]. While the Proposed Development would be taller than all other existing and planned buildings in the secondary study area, including the seven-story (110 feet tall) mixed-use building planned at 12 Franklin Street, resulting in a significant change, the addition of the Proposed Development would not be out of scale with Greenpoint's existing building fabric and its industrial heritage, as well as the neighborhood's anticipated future high-density, mixed-use building fabric. Although the Proposed Development would comprise a building of greater height than currently exists within the primary study area, the Proposed Development's massing and PAA features, together, would articulate and reconfigure the existing block, providing relief to the pedestrian. The Proposed Actions and Proposed Development would alter the streetscape surrounding the primary study area by introducing active pedestrian-oriented ground floor uses and disrupting the current streetwall and fencing that outlines the primary study area through the introduction of new view corridors that would transect the southern portion of the primary study area. The Proposed Actions and Proposed Development would not alter the configuration of the existing block; rather, the Proposed Development, through the introduction of an irregular streetwall and publicly accessible open spaces, would open up the existing block. As such, the Proposed Actions are not anticipated to result in any significant adverse impacts, but rather are expected to complement and improve the urban design characteristics of the primary and secondary study areas.

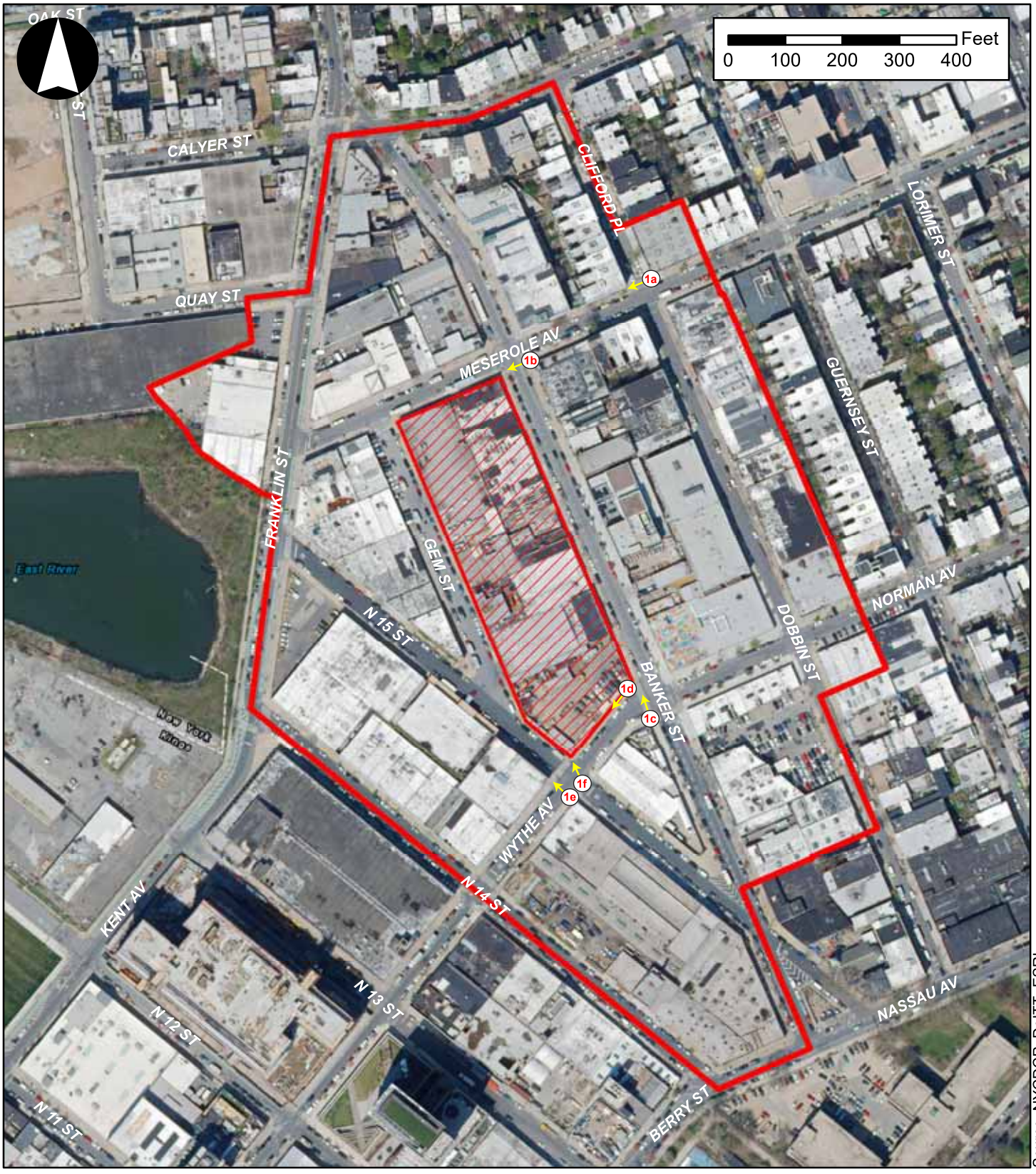
As illustrated in Figures 7-12 through 7-17, four view corridors would undergo a noticeable transformation in relation to the visual context of the primary study area, with the Proposed Development representing a visible change to the perspective of a pedestrian adjacent to the primary study area. As illustrated in these figures, the Proposed Development would alter the visual setting of the primary study area by replacing several low-rise industrial buildings, as well as open storage areas surrounded by metal fencing, with a development that is larger than adjacent low-rise buildings present in the surrounding secondary study area. However, the Proposed Development would not obstruct any views of visual resources, nor would the Proposed Development adversely impact the four view corridors in the secondary study area; rather, the Proposed Development would open up the existing block and generate additional view corridors through the southern portion of the primary study area. The Proposed Development would enhance the pedestrian experience adjacent to the primary study area through the improvement of streetscape and sidewalk conditions, including the introduction of new PAA, the elimination of unnecessary curb cuts, and the addition of numerous street trees. Additionally, the Proposed Development would feature two pedestrian pathways, which would improve circulation within the primary study area. The main pedestrian pathway would extend north-south from Wythe Avenue to the mid-block of the primary study area, and the second pedestrian pathway, under the commercial building, would extend east-west from Banker Street to Gem Street. Along Banker Street, Wythe Avenue, and North 15th Street, the Proposed Development would step back toward the north providing an open to the sky landscaped area. The main pedestrian pathway would begin at Wythe Avenue and proceed from the uncovered portion of the PAA to the covered portion of the PAA and the east-west connection. Both proposed pedestrian pathways would be flanked by ground level retail frontage to promote activity and security. In the context of this specific area, the pedestrian is also exposed to other buildings (e.g., 25 Kent

[4] It should be noted that, although the Acme Smoked Fish processing facility would reach a roofline height of approximately 74 feet, plus a mechanical louver screen above, the requested LSGD special permit would permit a maximum building height envelope of approximately 104 feet (including mechanical bulkhead).

[5] It should be noted that, although the commercial/retail component of the Proposed Development would reach a roofline height of approximately 172.5 feet, plus a mechanical bulkhead above, the requested LSGD special permit would permit a maximum building height envelope of approximately 178.5 feet to the roofline.

Avenue, the William Vale Hotel) that are of similar height to the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development's mixed-use commercial and industrial program, which would require taller floor-to-ceiling heights, and the inclusion of PAA features are consistent with both the project purpose and need, as well as the mixed-use land use character of the surrounding Greenpoint neighborhood. Therefore, while the addition of the Proposed Development to the primary study area would be a significant change from the perspective of a pedestrian, the change would not represent a significant adverse impact. As such, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse urban design or visual resource impacts in the primary study area or the surrounding secondary study area.

No-Action and With-Action Massing Figures - Photo Location Map



Source: NYCDCP; DoITT; ESRI

Legend

Primary Study Area (Development Site) | Secondary Study Area | 1a Photo Locations



1a. Existing and No-Action Conditions: Looking southwest from the northwestern corner of the intersection of Dobbin Street, Clifford Place, and Meserole Avenue.



2a. With-Action Condition: Looking southwest from the northwestern corner of the intersection of Dobbin Street, Clifford Place, and Meserole Avenue.



1b. Existing and No-Action Conditions: Looking southwest from the southeastern corner of the intersection of Banker Street and Meserole Avenue.



2b. With-Action Condition: Looking southwest from the southeastern corner of the intersection of Banker Street and Meserole Avenue.



1c. Existing Condition: Looking northwest from the southwestern corner of the intersection of Banker Street and Norman Avenue and Wythe Avenue.



2c. No-Action Condition: Looking northwest from the southwestern corner of the intersection of Banker Street and Norman Avenue and Wythe Avenue.



3c. With-Action Condition: Looking northwest from the southwestern corner of the intersection of Banker Street and Norman Avenue and Wythe Avenue.



1e. Existing Condition: Looking northwest from the southeastern corner of the intersection of North 15th Street and Wythe Avenue.



2e. No-Action Condition: Looking northwest from the southeastern corner of the intersection of North 15th Street and Wythe Avenue.



3e. With-Action Condition: Looking northwest from the southeastern corner of the intersection of North 15th Street and Wythe Avenue.



1f. Existing Condition: Looking northwest from the southeastern corner of the intersection of North 15th Street and Wythe Avenue.



2f. No-Action Condition: Looking northwest from the southeastern corner of the intersection of North 15th Street and Wythe Avenue.



3f. With-Action Condition: Looking northwest from the southeastern corner of the intersection of North 15th Street and Wythe Avenue.