Chapter 8: Urban Design and Visual Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential for the proposed actions to affect the urban design characteristics and visual resources of the primary study (rezoning) area, which is bounded generally by Bowery and Third Avenue on the west; East 13th Street to the north; Avenue D and Pitt Street on the east; and Delancey Street and Grand Street to the south. It is the purpose of the proposed actions to preserve the low-scale character of the East Village and Lower East Side neighborhoods while focusing new development towards specific areas that are more suitable for new residential construction with incentives for affordable housing. Since the proposed actions could result in the construction of structures, building uses, sizes, and types not currently permitted in the primary study area, this analysis has been prepared in accordance with New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), which requires that City agencies consider the effects of their actions on urban design and visual resources.

The technical analysis follows the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual*. As defined in the manual, urban design components and visual resources determine the "look" of a neighborhood—its physical appearance, including the street pattern, the size and shape of buildings, their arrangement on blocks, streetscape features, natural resources, and noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. The following analysis addresses each of these characteristics for existing conditions and the future without and with the proposed actions for a 2017 Build year.

B. METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this analysis considers the effects of the proposed actions on the following elements that collectively form an area's urban design:

- *Block Form and Street Pattern.* This urban design feature refers to the shape and arrangement of blocks and surroundings streets, such as a grid pattern with regularly sized, rectangular blocks. These features set street views, define the flow of activity through an area, and create the basic format on which building arrangements can be organized.
- *Building Arrangement.* This term refers to the way that buildings are placed on zoning lots and blocks. The buildings can have small or large footprints, be attached or detached and separated by open uses, and varied in their site plans. This urban design feature helps to convey a sense of the overall form and design of a block or a larger area.
- *Building Bulk, Use, and Type.* Buildings are usually described by these characteristics. A building's bulk is created from an amalgam of characteristics that include its height, length, and width; lot coverage and density; and shape and use of setbacks and other massing elements. The general use of a building (e.g., residential, manufacturing, commercial office) gives an impression of its appearance and helps to understand its visual and urban design character. Building type refers to a distinctive class of buildings and suggests distinguishing

features of a particular building. Examples of building type include: industrial loft, church, gas station, walk-up tenement.

- *Streetscape Elements.* Streetscape elements are the distinctive physical features that make up a streetscape, such as street walls, building entrances, parking lots, fences, street trees, street furniture, curb cuts, and parking ribbons. These features help define the immediate visual experience of pedestrians.
- *Street Hierarchy.* Streets may be classified as expressways, arterials, boulevards, collector/distributor streets, or local streets, and they may be defined by their width, type of access, and the presence or absence of at-grade pedestrian crossings. Street hierarchy helps convey a sense of the overall form and activity level of a neighborhood.
- *Topography and Natural Features.* Topographic and natural features help define the overall visual character of an area and may include varied ground elevation, rock outcroppings and steep slopes, vegetation, and aquatic features.

Throughout the study area, the topography, natural features, street pattern, block shapes, and building arrangements are quite similar. As such, these elements are discussed for the entire area. Building bulk, use, and type and streetscape features are discussed separately and in more detail for the proposed rezoning area and for the East Village, Alphabet City, Bowery, and Lower East Side subareas.

This analysis also considers the effects of the proposed actions on the area's visual resources, which the *CEQR Technical Manual* defines as unique or important public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features. Visual resources can include waterfront views, public parks, landmark structures or districts, or natural features, such as a river or geologic formations.

As recommended by the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this technical analysis evaluates impacts in the primary (rezoning) area, but because views into the primary study area from surrounding areas are limited due to intervening buildings, structures, and distance, a secondary study area, outside of the rezoning area, is not considered. The proposed actions are not expected to affect the urban design patterns in the secondary study area as new developments would be similar in use and scale that characterizes the primary study area and would thereby not affect the relationship between the primary and secondary study areas.

Similar to the analysis in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," this analysis discusses the primary study area by subarea, including: East Village; Alphabet City; Bowery; and Lower East Side.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The primary study area is mostly residential with a sizeable number of community facilities and open spaces scattered throughout; commercial uses, typically in the form of street-level retail, are common and located along both the north-south and east-west avenues and streets. The Lower East Side and the East Village neighborhoods are longstanding residential communities composed mostly of 19th-century tenements with supporting institutional uses, such as churches, synagogues, and schools, and much of the primary study area outwardly appears much as it did a hundred years ago.

Recent development in the East Village and Lower East Side neighborhoods has been primarily residential in nature, including construction of new buildings and renovations of existing structures. Other types of development include new academic buildings associated with New

York University (NYU), new academic buildings associated with Cooper Union near Astor Place (currently under construction), and a number of new, large-scale hotels on the Lower East Side south of East Houston Street. Although much of the primary study area retains its mid-rise character, there are also several newly constructed out-of-scale 10- to 20-story tower developments along Bowery and within the Lower East Side subarea.

The urban design characteristics and visual resources of the primary study area are described in more detail below.

URBAN DESIGN

As described above, topography, natural features, street pattern, block shapes, and building arrangements are discussed below for the entire area. Building bulk, use, and type and streetscape features are discussed separately and in more detail for the proposed rezoning area and for the subareas listed above. Figure 8-1 shows the location and direction of photographs referenced in the discussion below.

TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL FEATURES

Throughout the primary study area, the topography is generally level. There are no natural resource features in the area. Greenery is provided by street trees, parks, playfields, and community gardens. Tompkins Square Park is the largest park in the primary study area with an area of approximately ten acres. This park contains numerous mature trees, a lawn and gardens, basketball and handball courts, benches, playgrounds, and a pool. Sara D. Roosevelt Park runs a stretch of five blocks between Grand Street and East Houston Street in the north-south direction along Chrystie Street and Forsyth Street in the Bowery subarea. Several New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) housing developments are also located in the study area; amenities such as benches, trees, walkways, playgrounds, and basketball courts are located on the campus of the larger developments.

STREET PATTERN AND HIERARCHY

In general, streets in the primary study area form two distinct grid patterns that converge at East Houston Street. The street grid north of East Houston Street is a continuation of the Manhattan grid system with major north-south thoroughfares (avenues) and local east-west streets; the Manhattan grid system terminates at East Houston Street at a slight northeast/southwest angle. First (northbound) and Second (southbound) Avenues stretch from East Houston Street along the entire length of Manhattan into Harlem; Avenues A, B, C, and D are two-way streets that are more local in character, extending from East Houston to East 14th Streets (Avenue C extends a few blocks further north to FDR Drive). The numbered local streets are one-way streets, with odd-numbered streets carrying traffic westbound and even-numbered streets carrying traffic eastbound. The blocks in the primary study area north of East Houston Streets are longer in the east-west direction. Interruptions in the street grid north of East Houston Street are limited; St. Mark's Place/East 8th Street and East 9th Street are interrupted between Avenues A and B by Tompkins Square Park and East 5th Street between First Avenue and Avenue A is part of the superblock housing the Village View development. Stuyvesant Street between Second and Third Avenue runs diagonally between East 9th and East 10th Streets.

The street grid south of East Houston Street follows the pattern set by this wide street and forms rectangular blocks that are longer in the north-south direction. The major north-south streets within the primary study area south of East Houston Street include Chrystie Street, Allen Street,

and Essex Street, which line up with—although at a slight angle to—Second Avenue, First Avenue, and Avenue A, respectively. Chrystie Street, which carries two lanes of traffic in each direction, forms the western border of Sara D. Roosevelt Park and extends from East Houston Street to Canal Street and the Manhattan Bridge. Allen Street, also known as "Avenue of the Immigrants," is comprised of three moving lanes and one parking lane in each direction. A 25-foot-wide median flanked by benches and trees, called the Allen Malls, runs along the entire length of this wide street between East Houston and Division Streets. The malls are divided into eight sections, each containing a walkway and assigned a number, one through eight. Essex Street carries two lanes of traffic in each direction between East Houston and Canal Streets.

Delancey Street is the major east-west commercial street on the Lower East Side. This relatively short thoroughfare stretches from the Bowery and serves as the access point for the Williamsburg Bridge. Delancey Street is comprised of three moving lanes and one parking lane in each direction with a planted median between the Bowery and Suffolk Street (at the entrance to the Williamsburg Bridge). The remaining streets in the primary study area south of East Houston Streets are one-way local streets that typically alternate direction.

BLOCK SHAPES AND BUILDING ARRANGEMENTS

Most primary study area blocks are rectangular in shape, with blocks north of East Houston Street longer in the east-west direction and blocks south of East Houston Street longer in the north-south direction. As discussed above, the main Manhattan grid terminates at East Houston Street at a slight angle, resulting in triangular-shaped blocks along and adjacent to this east-west street between Second Avenue and Avenue D.

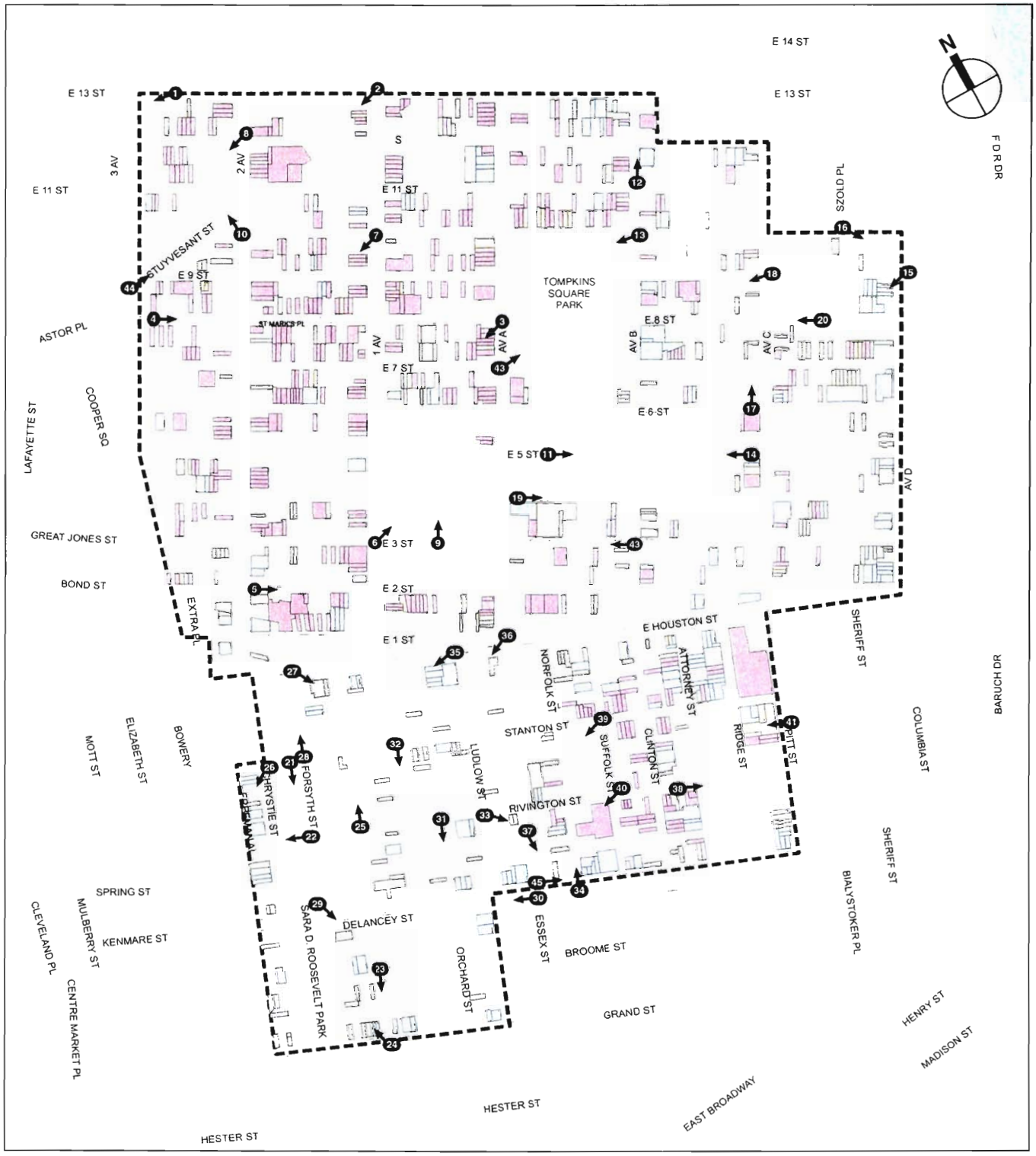
Most of the buildings in the East Village and Lower East Side neighborhoods tend to be attached and narrow, with 20- to 25-foot widths. Lots in the study area tend to be rectangular, but they vary in size, ranging from small 25- by 100-foot lots and 50- by 100-foot lots to much larger ones that occupy partial or full blocks. Unlike the larger housing developments that border the primary study area to the north, east, and south, most of the larger housing developments—with the exception of the Village View complex on First Avenue East 4th and East 6th Streets—and larger apartment buildings tend to be built to the streetwall; some of these buildings have irregular footprints with entrance courts, lightwells, and interior light courts. Buildings housing commercial uses and community facilities area also generally built out to the lot line.

STREETSCAPE AND BUILDING, BULK, USE AND TYPE

East Village Subarea

The discussion below focuses on the streetscape and building bulk, use and type of the East Village subarea.

Streetscape. Throughout the East Village subarea, the streetscape is urban in character. Residential buildings are found throughout the entire subarea and typically take the form of four- to six-story buildings on small lots (see view 1 of Figure 8-2). Many streets in this subarea, including local streets, have a commercial streetscape with tree-lined pedestrian sidewalks. A variety of retail is generally found on the ground floor of residential buildings along the major north-south streets: First Avenue, Second Avenue, and Avenue A, within the East Village subarea (see view 2 of Figure 8-2 and view 3 of Figure 8-3). Typical retail uses include restaurants, bars, coffee shops, delis, newsstands, clothing stores, and other neighborhood retail uses. St. Mark's Place is the principal east-west shopping street in the East Village and is lined



Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photo Key Location

Figure 8-1



View of the south of East 13th Street between Second and Third Avenues **1**



View of the southwest corner of First Avenue and East 13th Street **2**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
East Village Subarea

Figure 8-2



View of the southwest corner of Avenue A and St. Mark's Place **3**



View of the south side of St. Mark's Place between Second and Third Avenues **4**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
East Village Subarea
Figure 8-3

with a number of small retail establishments that reflect the arts culture of the East Village, including music shops, tattoo parlors, vintage and used clothing stores, antique shops, restaurants, and bars (see view 4 of Figure 8-3).

The largest open space in the East Village subarea is First Park at First Avenue and East 1st Street; this 1.4-acre playground contains benches, basketball courts, play equipment with safety surfacing, swings, and a kiosk selling snacks with a separate seating area. Other open spaces in this subarea include small parks and playgrounds adjacent to public schools, community gardens, a small park in front of St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery at Stuyvesant Street and East 10th Street, and Peretz Square, the small triangle formed by East Houston Street, East 1st Street, and First Avenue.

Another open space in the East Village subarea is the landmark New York City Marble Cemetery, which is laid out on the north side of East 2nd Street between First and Second Avenues (see view 5 of Figure 8-4). There are 258 marble-lined underground vaults accessible from square marble shaft covers set in the lawn of the cemetery. The cemetery is easily seen from the street through an iron fence with gate, extending along its south side on East 2nd Street. On the other three sides the cemetery is surrounded by a high brick wall and by houses and tenements. A dense growth of old trees is found throughout the cemetery making it an excellent green spot in this subarea.

Street furniture in this portion of the East Village subarea consists of standard metal street signs and lampposts. Street trees are common on most residential blocks. Many buildings have basement areas and/or stoops and it is common to find fences along the local side streets.

Building Bulk, Use and Type. Most buildings in the East Village subarea are four- to six-story brick walk-up tenements and three- to four-story brick rowhouses. These buildings tend to be narrow; most have cornices and many still retain their stoops. There are three large residential developments that differ from this low-rise residential pattern. The largest of these is Village View Housing, a tower-in-the-park residential development comprised of three 21-story buildings and four 16-story buildings, located along the east side of First Avenue between East 4th and East 6th Streets (see view 6 of Figure 8-4). This development occupies a superblock with five buildings located between East 6th Street and East 4th Street, and First Avenue and Avenue A. Another large scale, 20-story residential building exclusively for seniors in this subarea is Max Meltzer Tower, a NYCHA development located between First Avenue and Avenue A. First Houses, located on East 3rd Street between First Avenue and Avenue A is the oldest public housing development in the City. Unlike the taller residential buildings of Village View and Max Meltzer, this NYCHA development is comprised of a series of eight 4- to 5-story buildings along the south side of East 3rd Street, between First Avenue and Avenue A. A recent example of out-of-scale development in this subarea is the 15-story tower constructed above the Theater for the New City at 155 First Avenue between East 9th and 10th Streets (see view 7 of Figure 8-5).

As noted above, commercial uses, typically in the form of small retail shops, restaurants, and bars on both local and wide streets, are located throughout the East Village. The three-story Village East Cinema (also known as the landmark Louis N. Jaffee Art Theater, see Chapter 7, "Historic Resources") is featured prominently on the southwest corner of Second Avenue and East 12th Street (see view 8 of Figure 8-5).

Educational facilities also contribute to the urban design of the East Village subarea. There are a number of buildings associated with NYU's Washington Square Campus that are located within

or along the edge of the East Village subarea, including the 14-story Third Avenue North Residence Hall at 75 Third Avenue, the 16-story Alumni Hall at 33 Third Avenue, the 6-story Barney Building at 34 Stuyvesant Street, the Seventh Street Residence at 40 East 7th Street, and 111 and 113A Second Avenue, which houses part of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Public schools in this subarea are also notable for their design; the five-story East Side Community High School at 420 East 12th Street and the four-story Public School (P.S.) 63 at 121 East 3rd Street share the Charles B. J. Snyder mid-block H-plan design (see view 9 of Figure 8-6). The H-plan design uses the voids in the H shape as courts facing onto flanking streets to provide protected light and air for the classrooms.

There are a number of churches located in the East Village subarea, the most prominent of which include St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery at the intersection of Second Avenue, Stuyvesant Street, and East 10th Street (see view 10 of Figure 8-6), and the St. George Ukrainian Church located one-half block east of Third Avenue at the corner of East 7th Street and Taras Shevchenko Place. St. Mark's Church is punctuated by a clock-faced steeple and is aligned with Stuyvesant Street, which intersects the Manhattan street grid at an angle; while St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Church is clad in tan stone with an aqua-blue dome (or cupola). The St. George complex is a new multi-building development which includes the rectory, convent, and multiple dwellings for members of the community.

There are a number of prominent cultural institutions in the East Village, a substantial number of which are housed in former tenements and other buildings (built for a different use). The most prominent among these institutions are the Fourth Arts Block (FAB) and Performance Space 122. FAB is an association comprised of 13 non-profit cultural and community organizations located on East 4th Street between the Bowery and Second Avenue. This organization is housed in a group of six industrial buildings that are one- to six-stories tall. Many of the buildings on this block provide performance and rehearsal space for dance and theatre groups as well as offices for non-profit organizations. Performance Space 122 (also known as "P.S. 122"), the formerly abandoned four-story P.S. 122 that was converted into a community center and performance space in 1979, is located on the northeast corner of First Avenue and East 9th Street and continues to be a prominent center for arts and culture in New York City.

Alphabet City Subarea

The Alphabet City subarea covers approximately 29 blocks north of East Houston Street and east of Avenue A and is directly east of the East Village subarea. The streetscape and building bulk, use, and type of the area are described below.

Streetscape. The streetscape of the Alphabet City subarea is similar to that of the East Village subarea. Most tenement buildings have ornamental details, rusticated stone bases, decorative brickwork on the upper floors, bracketed cornices, and are highlighted with fire escapes hanging over the façades (see view 11 of Figure 8-7). Some of the newly constructed buildings in this subarea are low-rise masonry residential buildings that generally fit in well with the existing streetscape. Unlike the East Village subarea to the west—where street activity is common along the major north-south avenues as well as the east-west local streets, most street activity is concentrated along the avenues, where neighborhood retail storefronts are marked by awnings and projecting signs (see view 12 of Figure 8-7). The streetscapes along the local streets west of Avenue B include less intensive uses such as community gardens and residential buildings without street-level retail.



View of north side of East 2nd Street between First and Second Avenues (New York City Marble Cemetery) **5**



View of Village View Housing from First Avenue and East 3rd Street **6**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
East Village Subarea

Figure 8-4



View of the west side of First Avenue between East 9th and East 10th Streets **7**



View of the southwest corner of Second Avenue and East 12th Street **8**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
East Village Subarea

Figure 8-5



View of P.S. 63 at 121 East 3rd Street **9**



View of St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery at Second Avenue and Stuyvesant Street **10**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
East Village Subarea

Figure 8-6



View of East 5th Street toward Avenue B **11**



View north of Avenue B from East 11th Street **12**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Alphabet City Subarea

Figure 8-7

Alphabet City subarea consists of many tree-lined blocks and is anchored by the 10.5-acre Tompkins Square Park between Avenues A and B. Park amenities include basketball and handball courts, swings, several walkways lined with seating areas, a large dog run, several playgrounds, the Slocum Memorial Fountain, the Temperance Fountain, the Hare Krishna Tree, and the Samuel Sullivan Cox statue (see view 13 of Figure 8-8). The perimeter of Tompkins Square Park is lined with wrought-iron fences, trees, and planted areas (to secure the park when it is closed).

Building Bulk, Use and Type. The bulk and use pattern in the Alphabet City subarea is similar to the pattern found in the East Village subarea to the west and is generally comprised of four- to six-story tenements and three- to four-story rowhouses on small lots. The tallest residential building in this subarea is the landmark 15-story Christodora House on Avenue B at East 9th Street, which overlooks Tompkins Square Park. A number of residential buildings in this subarea—especially east of Avenue B—have been recently constructed to a bulk comparable to that of existing buildings. The NYCHA developments in Alphabet City subarea take the form of four- to seven-story attached rowhouses and residential buildings built to the street as opposed to the tower-in-the-park design common in other areas of the city (see view 14 of Figure 8-8).

Similar to the East Village subarea, commercial uses within the Alphabet City subarea are generally found on the ground floor of residential buildings along Avenues A through D. The retail uses on the first floor of these buildings include restaurants, apparel and clothing stores, specialty shops, delis, bars, small grocery stores, and other local retail uses. Commercial uses in this subarea are not as common when compared to the East Village subarea, but Avenue C is becoming increasingly well-known for its new bars and restaurants. Retail uses along Avenue D are local establishments that predominantly cater to the residents of the large residential developments to the east (see view 15 of Figure 8-9).

Industrial uses in this subarea are limited and concentrated in the northeast corner of this study area. The most prominent industrial building in the Alphabet City subarea is the Wheatsworth Factory building at 444 East 10th Street. This former factory, now a storage facility, is a seven-story brick building with Art Deco geometric motifs along its second-story and roofline cornices and retains its original multi-light metal factory windows (see view 16 of Figure 8-9).

In addition to Tompkins Square Park (discussed above), numerous community gardens are found throughout Alphabet City. The community gardens range in size from small gardens that occupy single lots on small side streets to large gardens that occupy multiple lots along major north-south streets (see Figure 8-10). Some of these community gardens contain mature trees and differ in terms of fencing, plantings, and available seating areas.

Institutional uses and public facilities are found throughout the Alphabet City subarea and include public schools, community centers, churches, and synagogues. The Church of the Most Holy Redeemer facing East 3rd Street between Avenues A and B is one of the most prominent structures in this subarea. This Gothic and Romanesque church is clad in limestone and designed with a 250-foot-tall square tower topped with a circular and domed cupola (see view 19 of Figure 8-11). The tower of this church can be easily seen at a distance from points north, south, and west. The St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church and School on the east side of Avenue B between East 7th and East 8th Streets facing Tompkins Square Park is another prominent building in this subarea. This Gothic church, which has two corner towers and a central pitched-roof section with three pointed-arch entrances, is currently unused and closed to the public.

The former P.S. 64 along East 9th Street just east of Avenue B is a five-story brick and stone school building in the Charles B. J. Snyder mid-block H-plan design with a French Renaissance Revival style. This building is currently vacant. Another notable school building in this subarea is P.S. 15 at 333 East 4th Street. This five-story brick and stone building, designed in the Renaissance Revival style, is set on a stone base, above which are window bays separated by brick pilasters and with stone ornament above the windows. A third prominent school building, the L-shaped three-story red brick P.S. 64, occupies the entire eastern blockfront along Avenue B between East 4th and East 6th Streets.

The New York Police Department's (NYPD) 9th Precinct occupies a new four-story gray brick and stone building on the northeast corner of Avenue C and East 8th Street. The 9th Precinct's two-story garage is clad in louvers that change color from white to gray to black and partially mask the interior of this facility (see view 20 of Figure 8-11).

Bowery Subarea

The Bowery subarea is the primary study area south of East Houston Street and west of Allen Street.

Streetscape. The most defining streetscape feature in the Bowery subarea is the Sara D. Roosevelt Park, an approximately 150-foot-wide linear park extending from Canal Street to East Houston Street between Chrystie and Forsyth Streets (see view 21 of Figure 8-12). Parts of four streets—Stanton, Rivington, Broome and Hester Streets—were closed to create the contiguous areas of this park, which include a number of active and passive uses lined at the perimeter with benches and shade trees (see view 22 of Figure 8-12). Chrystie and Forsyth Streets, which border Roosevelt Park to the west and east, respectively, are wide streets with limited pedestrian activity (there are no sidewalks adjacent to the park along these streets).

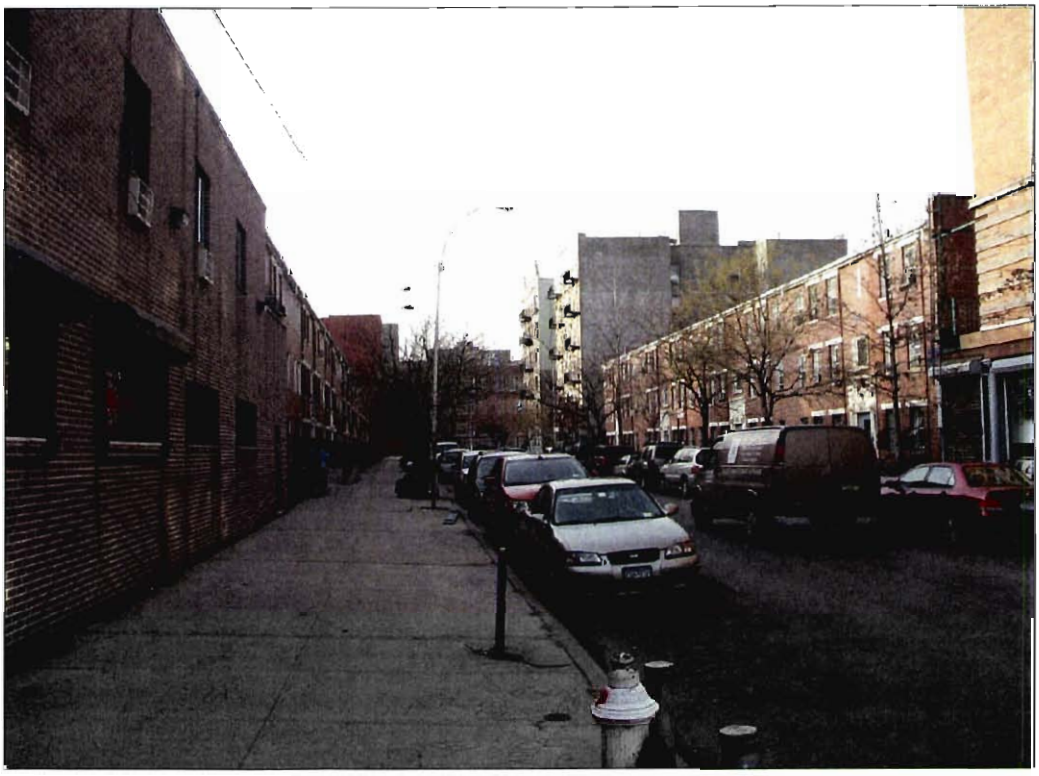
Outside of Roosevelt Park, the primary streetscape feature in this subarea is one of wide streets lined mostly with low- to mid-rise buildings. Many buildings along the streets in the Bowery subarea do not have street-level retail uses, which typically add to a more active streetscape. Instead, many of these streets are lined with warehouses and suppliers, and sidewalks, especially south of Delancey Street, are generally crowded with foodstuffs and packages waiting to be loaded by workers into idling vans and trucks that double-park along the street (see view 23 of Figure 8-13). Both Chrystie Street and Allen Street are major vehicular streets that carry large volumes of traffic through the Lower East Side neighborhood to points north and south; these large volumes, in addition to the lack of street-level retail along streets, makes these roadways less desirable for pedestrians. Overall, pedestrian activity is this area is markedly less when compared to the adjacent commercial areas. Pedestrian traffic and activity is heaviest to the north along East Houston Street and to the south along Grand Street, the latter of which is Chinatown-style commercial corridor, lined with restaurants, seafood and meat markets, small electronics shops, and a few remaining decorations and fabric stores (see view 24 of Figure 8-13).

The dark-colored brick and stone residential buildings in this area are adorned with steel fire escapes. Street trees are limited to Eldridge Street.

Building Bulk, Use and Type. For the most part, the Bowery subarea is lined by low- to mid-rise, non-descript commercial and industrial buildings, along with residential buildings, similar to those found in the Lower East Side and in the East Village subarea. Four- to six-story tenements buildings in this area, with ground-floor retail uses, are concentrated along Eldridge Street. Most residential buildings are low- to mid-rise attached rowhouses or apartment buildings



View southwest of Tompkins Square Park from Avenue B and East 10th Street **13**



View west of East 5th Street from Avenue C **14**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Alphabet City Subarea

Figure 8-8



View of west side of Avenue D between East 8th and East 9th Streets **15**



View of the south side of East 10th Street east of Szold Place **16**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Alphabet City Subarea
Figure 8-9



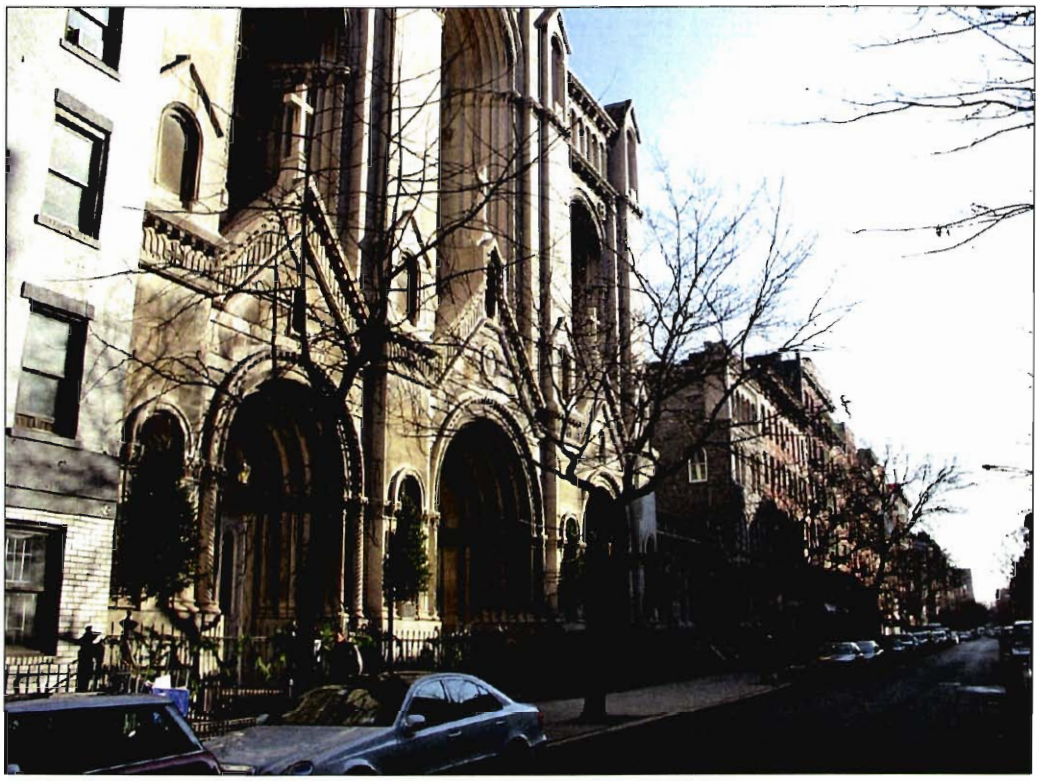
View of 6th Street and Avenue B Garden **17**



View of La Plaza Cultural from Avenue C and East 9th Street **18**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Alphabet City Subarea

Figure 8-10



View of the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer from East 3rd Street and Avenue A **19**



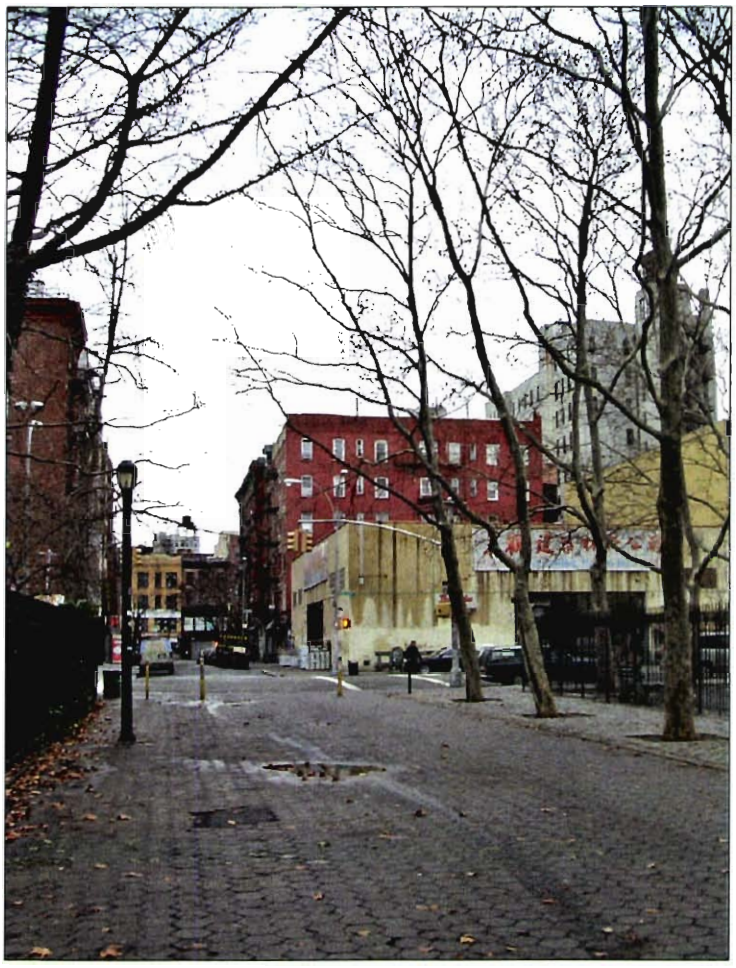
View of the NYPD 9th Precinct along East 8th Street east of Avenue C **20**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Alphabet City Subarea

Figure 8-11



View of Roosevelt Park south of Stanton Street **21**



View west of Rivington Street through Roosevelt Park **22**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Bowery Subarea
Figure 8-12



View south of Eldridge Street at Broome Street **23**



View of the north side of Grand Street between Forsyth and Eldridge Streets **24**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Bowery Subarea

Figure 8-13

that create continuous streetwalls, including NYCHA's Lower East Side I Infill development, which is comprised of five buildings between four and nine stories in height and spread over portions of three blocks along Eldridge Street between Stanton and Delancey Streets (see view 25 of Figure 8-14). One exception is the 17-story Rafael Hernandez building on the northwest corner of Allen and Stanton Streets, just south of East Houston Street. A number of tenements along Forsyth Street south of Delancey Street are registered landmarks.

As stated above, commercial uses in the Bowery subarea are not as common when compared to adjacent areas. Commercial and light industrial uses, such as warehouses, wholesalers, distributers, and hardware stores that support Chinatown's commercial corridors, are located along Chrystie Street and housed in buildings of various styles ranging in heights from two to nine stories (see view 26 of Figure 8-14). One notable commercial building in this subarea in the Landmark Theaters' Sunshine Cinema, a five-screen art-house cinema housed in the former Houston Hippodrome motion picture theatre on East Houston Street between Forsyth and Eldridge Streets (see view 27 of Figure 8-15). This three-story building is faced in tan brick with decorative orange brick framing the upper floor windows; the center section of the façade is characterized by a wide, low marquee and a large center arched window divided into several small windows. A number of boutique and small hotels have also opened in this subarea recently; the boutique East Houston Hotel at 151 East Houston Street and Eldridge Street is housed in a renovated five-story red brick former tenement with a one-story brown addition.

Community facilities are also featured prominently in this subarea. P.S. 91 at the northeast corner of Forsyth and Stanton Streets, which houses the Adult Education Complex, is a five-story pink brick and white stone building designed in the Renaissance Revival style by Charles B.J. Snyder with window bays separated by brick pilasters and stone ornament above the windows (see view 28 of Figure 8-15). The five-story pink brick building with rounded windows on the fourth floor at 45 Rivington Street houses a dental services facility and treatment center for Village Care of New York. The landmark six-story University Settlement House at 184 Eldridge Street, which continues to offer social welfare programs, has a restrained design with a rusticated ground floor and upper floors primarily ornamented with stone window lintels and keystones.

There are several churches that are dispersed in the Bowery subarea. Church of Grace to Fujianese NY is located on Allen St between Rivington and Delancey Streets in a building formerly occupied by the Allen Street Baths. The brick and stone, former Seventh-Day Adventist Church of Union Square at 128 Forsyth Street, is now the Iglesia Adventista Delancey (see view 29 of Figure 8-16). The primary façade of this building fronts on Forsyth Street where a tall stoop leads to three arched entrances; the unusual design included retail businesses along the ground floor along Delancey Street. The five-story tan brick New York Chinese Alliance Church, with a glass-block entryway, located on Eldridge Street just north of Delancey Street.

Lower East Side Subarea

The Lower East Side subarea comprises the primary study area south of East Houston Street and east of Allen Street. This subarea is in transition as evidenced by a large number of sites currently under construction.

Streetscape. The Lower East Side subarea is comprised of tenements, schools, religious buildings, and postwar housing developments. Tenement lots, typically 25-by-100 feet, establish the area's basic scale, and the storefronts open out to the street. Most buildings are attached and built to the lot lines, creating uniform street walls. The defining streetscape characteristic of this

subarea is the Bargain District, generally defined as the area bounded by East Houston, Essex, Grand, and Allen Streets and formerly known for the discounted apparel shops, tailors, and fabric stores that once dominated its streetscapes (see view 30 of Figure 8-17). This district is now home to an increasing number of up-scale restaurants, boutiques, specialty shops, signature clothing shops, spas, and lounges. The numerous retail storefronts throughout this subarea are marked by a profusion of signs and awnings (see view 31 of Figure 8-17). A unique streetscape feature on the Lower East Side is the presence of second-floor storefronts.

Pedestrian traffic is heaviest on weekends and concentrated in the commercial portions of the Lower East Side subarea, which include the north side of Delancey Street between Allen and Clinton Streets, Orchard and Ludlow Streets in the Bargain District, and Grand Street. On Sundays, Orchard Street between Delancey and East Houston Streets is closed to vehicular traffic, transforming the streetscape into an outdoor pedestrian shopping district (part of the Bargain District). The bars, restaurants, and nightclubs in this area also generate substantial pedestrian activity during the evenings and late nights. New buildings in this subarea typically contain ground-floor retail to match the character of the surrounding uses.

Street furniture consists of metal street signs, street lights, metal garbage bins, parking meters, fire hydrants, and newspaper boxes. Street trees are primarily found along the wide sidewalks and along Clinton Street. Tenements in this area are adorned with steel fire escapes. Stoops and fences are more prevalent in the residential areas in the eastern portion of this subarea.

Public open spaces in the subarea are limited to two playgrounds adjacent to public schools, three community gardens in this subarea, and small linear green spaces along the area's main thoroughfares. The Allen Malls, divided into eight sections, each containing a walkway and assigned a number one through eight (sections four through eight are located in this subarea) extend along Allen Street between East Houston Street and East Broadway; restrooms are located on the north side of the Allen and Delancey Street intersection, and benches and trees flank the full extension of the malls (see view 32 of Figure 8-18). Portions of East Houston and Delancey Streets are classified as "greenstreets," a citywide program administered by DPR to convert paved, vacant traffic islands and medians into green spaces filled with shade trees, flowering trees, shrubs, and groundcover.

Building Bulk, Use and Type. Many of the buildings in the Lower East Side subarea consist of four- to six-story tenements with retail uses at the street level. With few exceptions, including the six-story Pueblo Nuevo Housing complex located on Pitt Street at Stanton Street, most buildings are attached and built to the lot lines, creating uniform street walls (as noted above). While a number of recent residential and mixed-use developments have been built to existing low- to mid-rise scale of this area, higher-density residential and hotel development is becoming a more frequent occurrence, with a number of taller residential or mixed-use buildings currently under construction or recently completed. These new out-of-scale developments include the 15-story Blue Condo on Norfolk Street, the 21-story Hotel on Rivington at 107 Rivington Street between Ludlow and Essex Streets, the 23-story Ludlow located on Ludlow Street and East Houston Street, and a 19-story hotel at 200 Allen Street just south of East Houston Street (see Figures 8-19 and 8-20). Two additional tall residential developments along Delancey Street are in their early construction phases: a 16-story building at Forsyth Street and an 18-story building at Ludlow Street.

As discussed in "Streetscape" above, commercial uses are common in this subarea and typically take the form of street-level retail in older tenements and commercial buildings. Up-scale retail shops along Orchard and Ludlow Streets are replacing former discounted apparel and fabric



View north of Eldridge Street at Rivington Street **25**



View of the west side of Chrystie Street south of Stanton Street **26**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Bowery Subarea

Figure 8-14



Sunshine Theater on East Houston Street between Forsyth and Eldridge Streets **27**



View of P.S. 91 at Stanton and Forsyth Streets **28**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Bowery Subarea

Figure 8-15



View of the southeast corner of Forsyth and Delancey Streets **29**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Bowery Subarea

Figure 8-16



View of Delancey Street west of Essex Street **30**



View south of Orchard Street at Rivington Street **31**

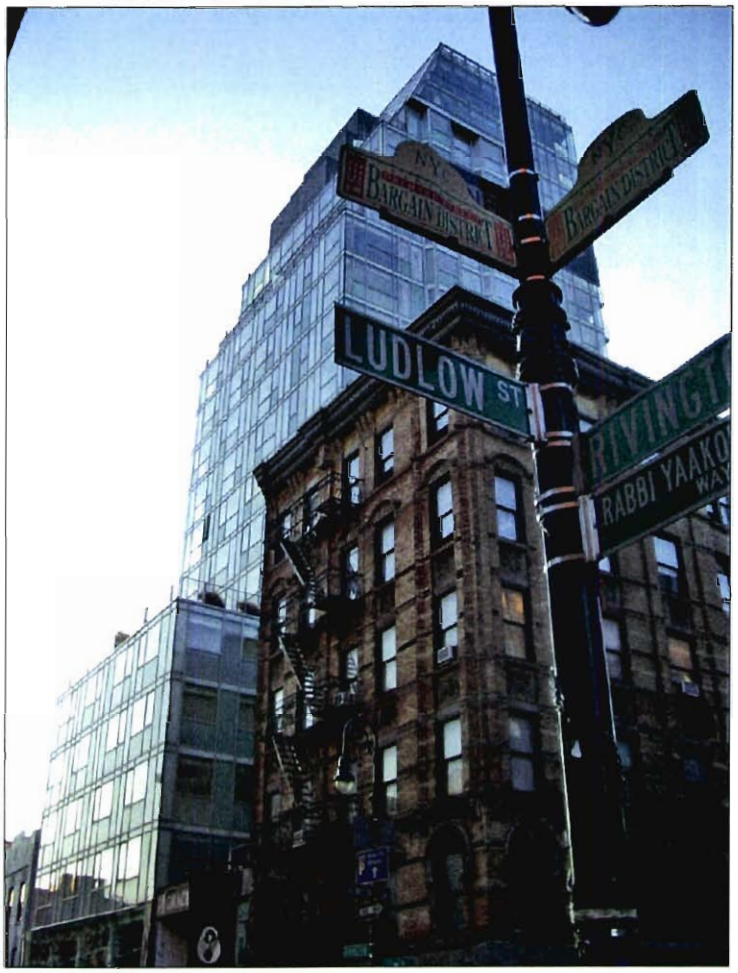
Urban Design and Visual Resources
Lower East Side Subarea



View of the Allen Mall south of Stanton Street **32**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Lower East Side Subarea

Figure 8-18



View of the Hotel on Rivington from Rivington and Ludlow Streets **33**



View of Blue Condo from Delancey and Norfolk Streets **34**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Lower East Side Subarea

Figure 8-19



View southwest at East Houston and Ludlow Streets **35**



View of The Ludlow from Essex and East Houston Streets **36**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Lower East Side Subarea
Figure 8-20

shops. Delancey Street between Allen and Clinton Streets is lined with local, regional, and national retailers, including a number of optical shops. Essex Street Market, located prominently at Delancey and Essex Streets, is comprised of three low-rise market halls and offers a range of culinary products from numerous merchants (see view 37 of Figure 8-21). The commercial uses east of Essex Street and north of the Delancey Street commercial corridor are typically older local retail uses and include restaurants, delis, small grocery stores, hair and nail salons, tailors and dry cleaners, and discount stores. Along Clinton Street, these local retail shops mix with the increasing number of specialty apparel shops, coffee shops, and up-scale restaurants.

This neighborhood is also home to many bars and small night clubs, live music venues, and performance spaces, including the Bowery Ballroom on Delancey Street, Mercury Lounge on East Houston Street, and Pianos on Ludlow Street.

There are a few remaining light industrial uses scattered throughout this subarea include loft spaces, wholesalers, and warehouses; a small enclave of one-story auto repair shops is located on Attorney Street between East Houston and Stanton Streets.

Community facilities and institutions are a common land use in this subarea, typically housed in prominent buildings and occupying large tracts of land. P.S. 20 shares an entire block with the ABC Playground at East Houston and Essex Streets; the two other public elementary schools in this subarea: P.S. 140 and P.S. 142, are located across the street from each other at Rivington and Ridge Streets. All three schools are three stories tall, clad in tan brick, and have large windows; P.S. 142 has a circular shape (see view 38 of Figure 8-21). The Lower East Side Preparatory School and the Marta Valle School share a four-story brown and tan brick facility on Stanton Street, occupying the entire block bounded by Stanton, Suffolk, Rivington, and Norfolk Streets (see view 39 of Figure 8-22). The Clemente Soto Velez Cultural & Educational Center (CSV), a Puerto Rican/Latino cultural institution that provides affordable space for the arts, is housed in a five-story stone building on the southwest corner of Rivington and Suffolk Streets (see view 40 of Figure 8-22).

There are also a number of religious institutions in the Lower East Side subarea, which further reflect the diversity of this neighborhood. Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church, including its Parish School, is located on the southwest corner of Stanton and Pitt Streets (see view 41 of Figure 8-23). This church has a number of stained-glass windows and four small towers, each topped with small cross, flanking the main entrance on Pitt Street. The Congregation Chasam Sopher, the city's second oldest synagogue, is located in a small two-story red brick building at 8 Clinton Street just south of East Houston Street. Spanish-speaking churches in this subarea include the Iglesia Pentecostal Arca De Salvacion housed in a four-story tan building with green trim on the southwest corner of East Houston and Suffolk Streets and the Iglesia Alianza Cristiana y Misionera (housed in a former low-scale industrial building) on Attorney Street between East Houston and Stanton Streets.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The primary study area is characterized by a variety of older, mostly masonry-faced low- to mid-rise buildings, including numerous churches; several newer residential buildings, many with primarily glass curtain walls; and numerous parks and community gardens. Many buildings throughout the study area have ground-floor commercial components. Buildings along many of the narrow east-west streets and wider streets, including East Houston Street and First and Second Avenues, contribute to continuous streetwalls that help define view corridors. Building heights and styles are more constant along the east-west residential streets when compared to the

wider north-south avenues and East Houston Street. While the low- to mid-rise character of the portions of the study area north of East Houston Street is largely intact, a number of new, taller buildings have been developed south of East Houston Street, interrupting the former visual consistency of this area. Throughout much of the study area, there are expansive views of the sky due to the area's primarily low-rise buildings.

Visual resources in the study area include Tompkins Square Park, Sara D. Roosevelt Park, the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer on East 3rd Street between Avenues A and B, views along Stuyvesant Street to the St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery, views east along Delancey Street toward the Williamsburg Bridge, and community gardens occupying small lots throughout the study area.

The three-block 10.5-acre Tompkins Square Park is has an approximately ten-foot-tall black cast-iron fence around its border and contains trees, landscaping, paved walkways, small park structures, a playground, and benches. This park is visible for longer distances along Avenues A and B when compared to East 7th and East 10th Streets, all of which frame this park (see view 42 of Figure 8-24). Views from within Tompkins Square Park include the surrounding low-rise buildings and the older masonry-faced buildings along Avenue A, Avenue B, and St. Mark's Place, most of which have ground-floor retail. The long and narrow Sara D. Roosevelt Park extends several blocks north-south through the Lower East Side and East Village. This visual resource creates a break in the densely developed study area and provides some views to the Manhattan Bridge to the south (see view 21 of Figure 8-12). The numerous community gardens throughout the study area are also visual resources.

Both the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer and the St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery are architecturally distinguished historic buildings that are visual resources as they are prominently visible from nearby vantage points in the study area. The Church of the Most Holy Redeemer's 250-foot-tall square spire is one of the tallest structures in the study area north of East Houston Street and is visible from greater distances from points north, south, and west (see view 43 of Figure 8-24). Although views of the St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery are more limited due to its location set away from Second Avenue, the former church building is located prominently at the northeastern edge of the Saint Mark's Historic District (see Chapter 7, "Historic Resources"). This former church is aligned with Stuyvesant Street, which extends diagonally interrupting the Manhattan street grid. Stuyvesant Street is characterized by its architecturally consistent five-story brick-faced rowhouses with limestone at the ground floors and projecting cornices (see view 44 of Figure 8-25).

Views in the project area generally result from the two distinct street grids that comprise the project area and are delineated by East Houston Street, a wide, east-west multi-lane street. The street grid north of East Houston Street is a continuation of the Manhattan street grid with north-south streets intersecting East Houston Street at a slight angle and, thereby limiting north-south views. The street grid south of East Houston Street follows the pattern set by this wide street; the north-south streets of this grid align with—although at a slight angle to—several of the north-south streets north of East Houston Street, also restricting longer views north of this wide street. With the exception of First and Second Avenues, which are wide, straight, north-south avenues that extend the entire length of Manhattan into Harlem, views north in the project study area are limited by Stuyvesant Town's tall buildings set within superblocks that interrupt the street grid and the Consolidated Edison (Con Ed) complex along East 14th Street. Views away from the study area are also limited by shifts in the street grid (to the west), tall multi-building residential developments (to the east), or both (to the south). Views to the East River, which is



Essex Street Market **37**



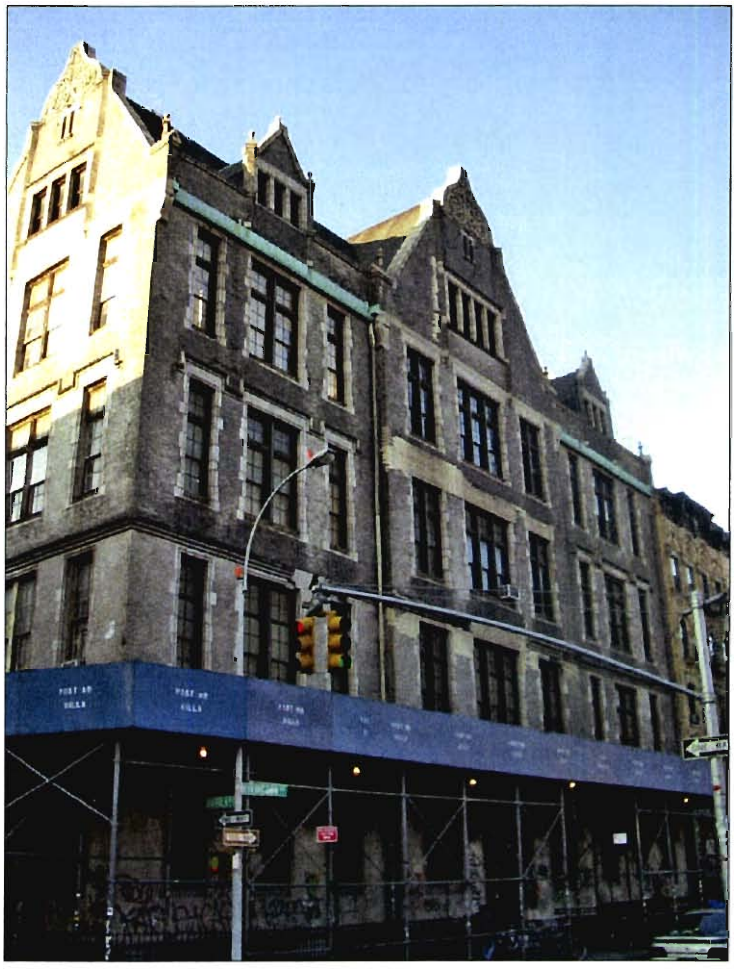
P.S. 140 (to the left) and P.S. 142 along Rivington Street **38**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Lower East Side Subarea

Figure 8-21



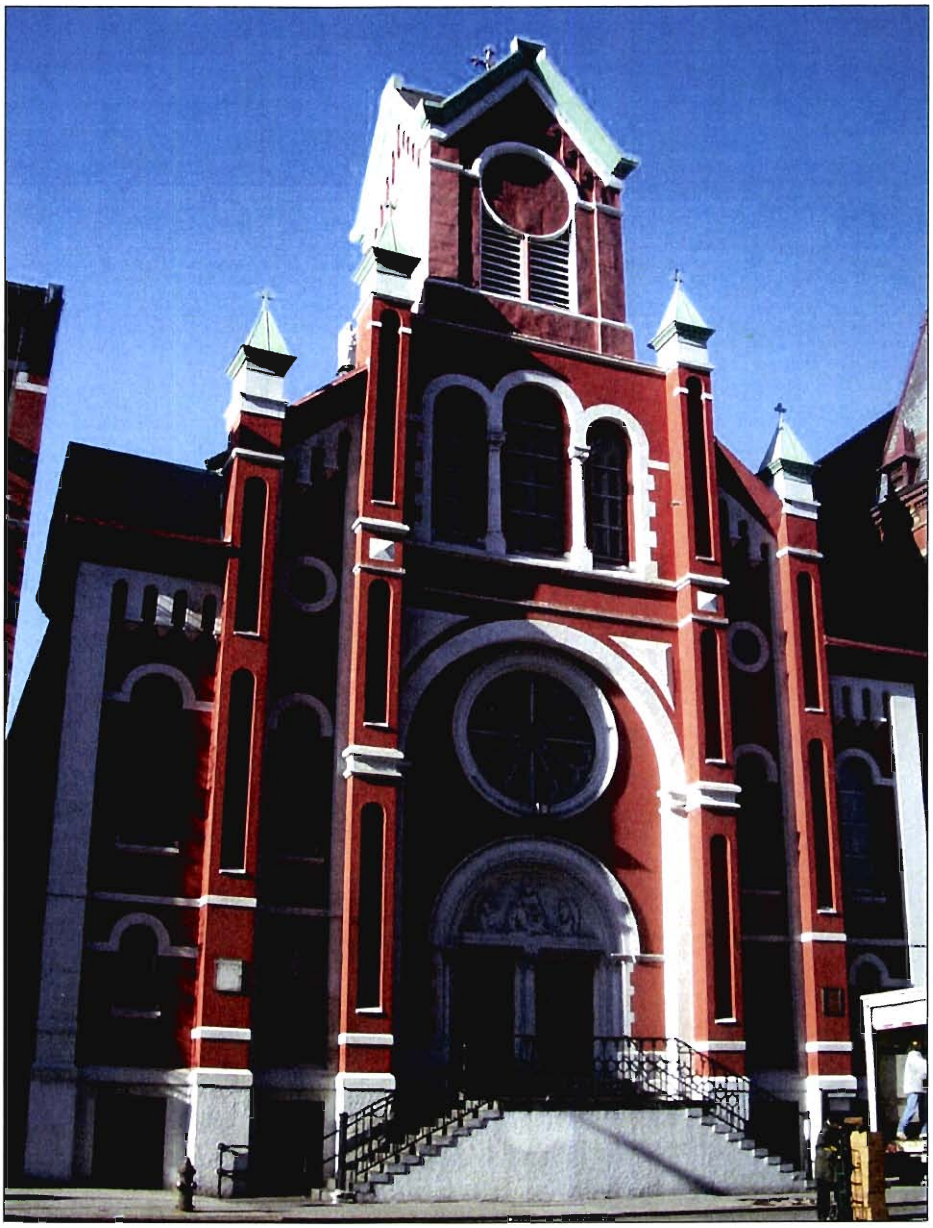
The Lower East Side Preparatory School and the Marta Valle School at 145 Stanton Street **39**



CSV Center at Rivington and Suffolk Streets **40**

Urban Design and Visual Resources Lower East Side Subarea

Figure 8-22



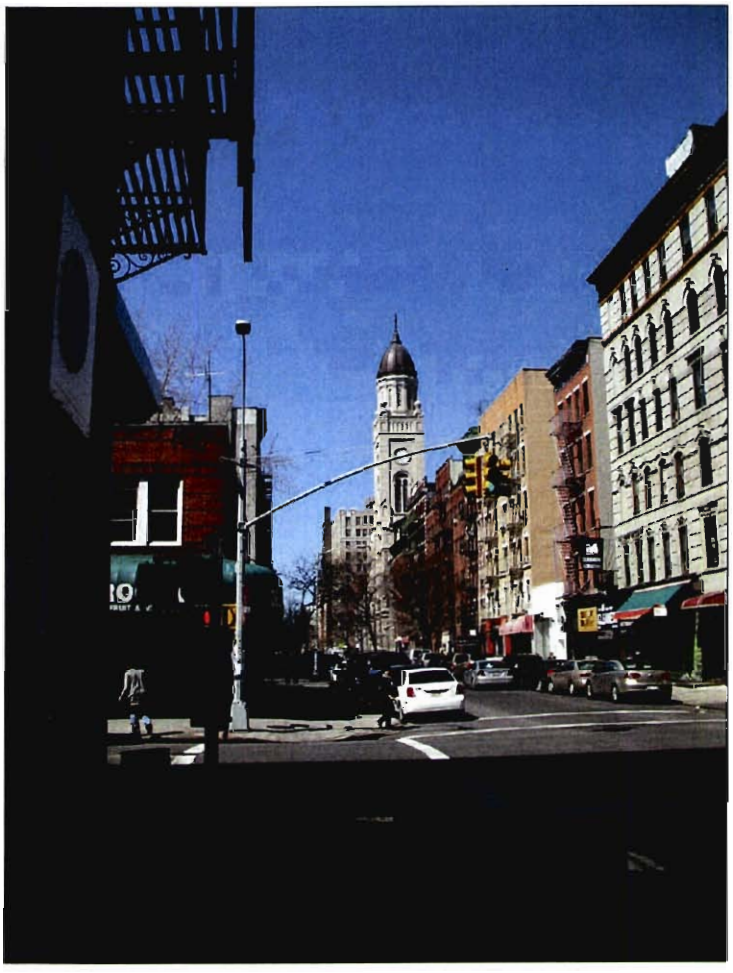
Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church on Pitt Street **41**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
East Side Subarea

Figure 8-23



View of Tompkins Square Park from Avenue A and East 7th Street **42**

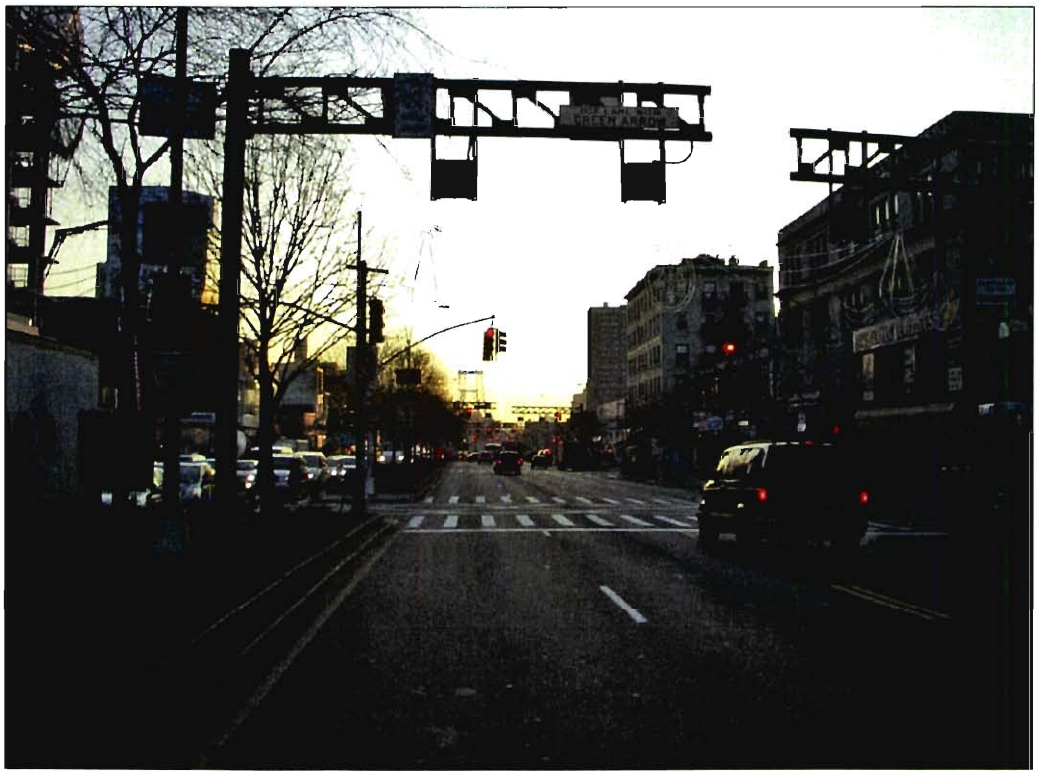


View of Church of the Most Holy Redeemer from Avenue B and East 3rd Street **43**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
East Side Subarea
Figure 8-24



View east of Stuyvesant Street from East 9th Street (St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery in background) **44**



View east of Delancey Street at Allen Street (Williamsburg Bridge in background) **45**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
East Side Subarea

Figure 8-25

approximately ¼ to ½ mile east of the primary study area, are limited to some east-west streets, including East 6th, East Houston, and Delancey Streets. Short streets, however, do add some variability to views within the study area.

Views in the study area are generally long due to the relative straightness of the streets, flat topography, and the abundance of four- to six-story buildings that characterize the area. However, the views along the study area view corridors are limited to the study area itself due to shifts in the street grid and tall multi-building superblock developments immediately adjacent to the primary study area. View corridors include views east along Delancey Street and views north-south along First and Second Avenues. Delancey Street is a wide street with four lanes of traffic in each direction, a center median, and curbside parking. This east-west street is lined with low- and mid-rise older and newer buildings with ground-floor retail. Views east along Delancey Street prominently feature the towers of the Williamsburg Bridge (see view 45 of Figure 8-25).

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

Topography and Natural Features

In the future without the proposed actions, the primary study area's topography and natural features would remain level and there would not be any natural features. Greenery would continue to consist of street trees, parks, playfields, and community gardens.

Street Pattern and Hierarchy

In the future without the proposed actions, the streets in the primary study area would continue to form two distinct grid patterns. The street grid north of East Houston would remain as a continuation of the Manhattan grid system with avenues as the major north-south thoroughfares and local east-west streets. Below East Houston Street, the grid system would continue to terminate at a slight northeast/southwest angle.

Block Shapes and Building Arrangements

Block shapes would not change in the future without the proposed actions. Most of the primary study area's blocks would remain rectangular in shape. The blocks north of East Houston Street would remain longer in the east-west direction and the blocks south would be longer in the north-south direction.

Streetscape

In the future without the proposed actions, the streetscape's throughout the rezoning area would remain urban in character with a diversity of uses and tree-lined blocks. In the East Village, local streets would continue to have a commercial streetscape with a mixture of neighborhood retail uses. The Alphabet City subarea's streetscape would continue to be similar to the East Village and Tompkins Square Park would continue to anchor the subarea. Sara D. Roosevelt Park would continue to serve as the defining characteristic of the Bowery. Finally, the Lower East Side would continue to have a vibrant mixture of commercial and residential uses.

Building Bulk, Use and Type

As described more fully in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy," there are several projects planned or under construction in the primary study area. Within the primary study area, new development comprised of residential, commercial, and hotel uses—a number of these

anticipated projects would reach heights 15 stories or taller—would be concentrated south of East Houston Street (see Table 2-3 and Figure 2-5). These taller developments include: a 23-story residential building (known as "The Ludlow") with street-level retail nearing completion along East Houston Street; the 15-story Blue Condo located on Norfolk Street between Rivington and Delancey Streets (also nearing completion); a 19-story hotel at 200 Allen Street just south of East Houston Street; and two residential buildings of 16 and 18 stories along Delancey Street. These new buildings would contrast with the existing low- to mid-rise urban design and visual character that is prevalent in this area. These new buildings could be constructed to significant heights and set back from the street, which differs from the urban design that is found throughout the rezoning area (see Figure 8-26 through 8-27b).

Anticipated developments north of East Houston Street within the primary study area include a six-story residential development with street-level retail on East 8th Street between Avenue C and D and a seven-story residential extension on top of an existing five-story building fronting Avenue D.

In addition, the reasonable worst-case development scenario (RWCDS) for the proposed actions assumes that development would occur in the future without the proposed actions throughout the primary study area on some of the projected and potential development sites in accordance with existing zoning. Finally, the RWCDS anticipates that in the future without the proposed actions, Projected Development Site 167 would be developed with five separate buildings at the corner of Avenue D and East 2nd Street, each 60 feet tall, with ground-floor retail space.

E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

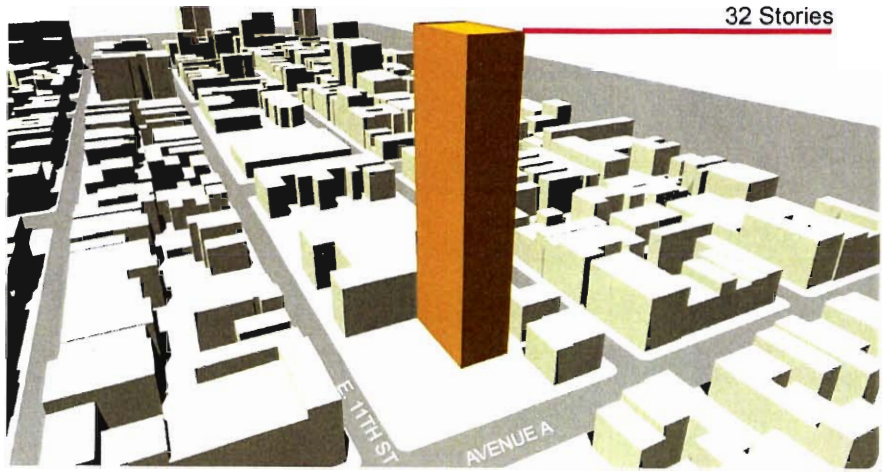
As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the proposed actions include zoning map and text amendments and the disposition of city-owned property. The proposed actions would allow for increased density of residential use along East Houston Street and Avenue D, restrict the permitted density of residential use in the remainder of the study area as to be contextual with existing established medium-density residential neighborhoods (proposed text amendments would also preserve existing non-complying commercial uses in residential areas), and permit increased commercial density along the major transportation corridors. Overall, the proposed actions would reinforce the use of several avenues as corridors for mixed retail/residential buildings and provide opportunities for affordable housing along selected wide streets and major corridors while allowing for appropriately scaled development in the neighboring low- to mid-rise residential communities in the primary study area.

By 2017, it is anticipated that the proposed actions would be in place, and that, as a result, all or most of the 180 projected sites and some of the 123 potential sites in the RWCDS would be redeveloped. Development on the projected development sites and the less likely redevelopment of the potential development sites pursuant to the proposed actions would affect the area's urban design, specifically the streetscape and building bulk, use, and type of the area, as described below.

URBAN DESIGN

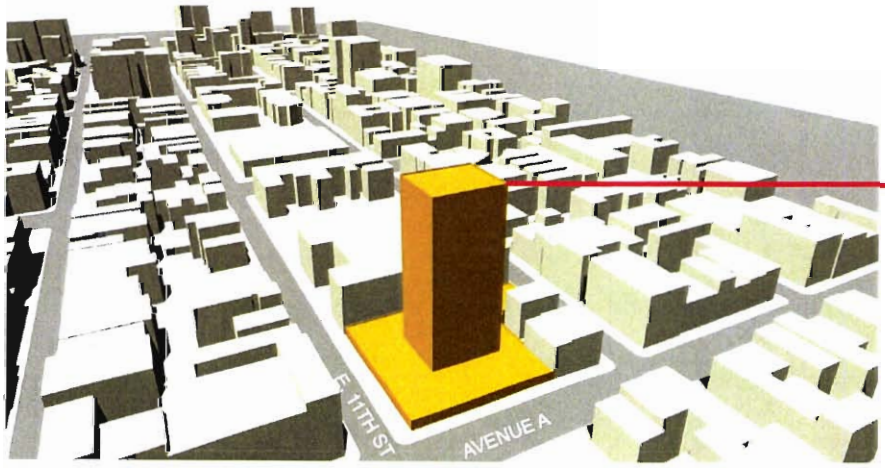
TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL FEATURES

The proposed actions and the RWCDS would not alter the topography and natural resources of the primary study area. Although redevelopment of any projected and potential development



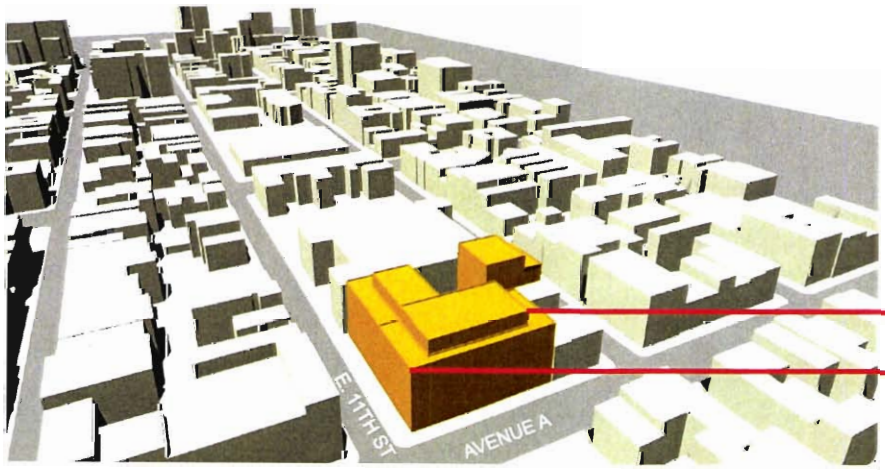
Existing R7-2

Community Facility FAR: 6.5



Existing R7-2

Residential FAR: 3.44

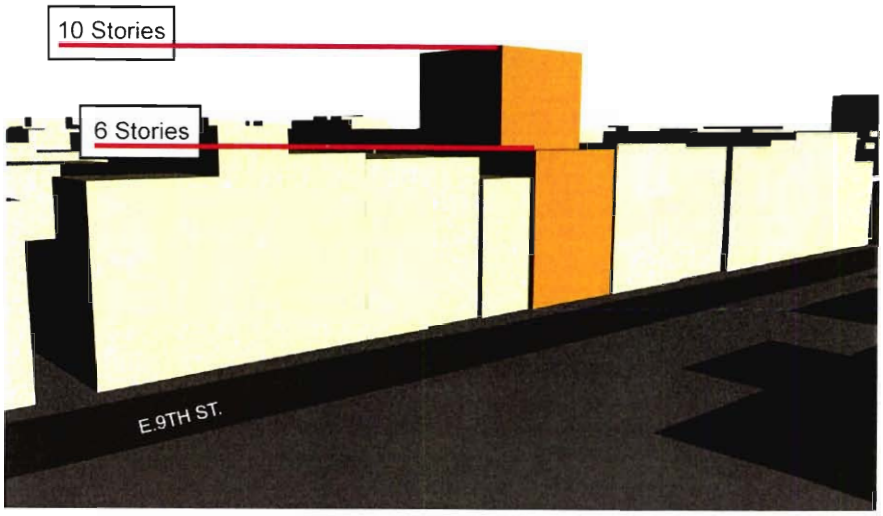


Proposed R7A

Residential FAR: 4.0
40-foot to 65-foot Streetwall
80-foot Maximum Height

Zoning Framework:
Building Form R7A Zoning District
Figure 8-26

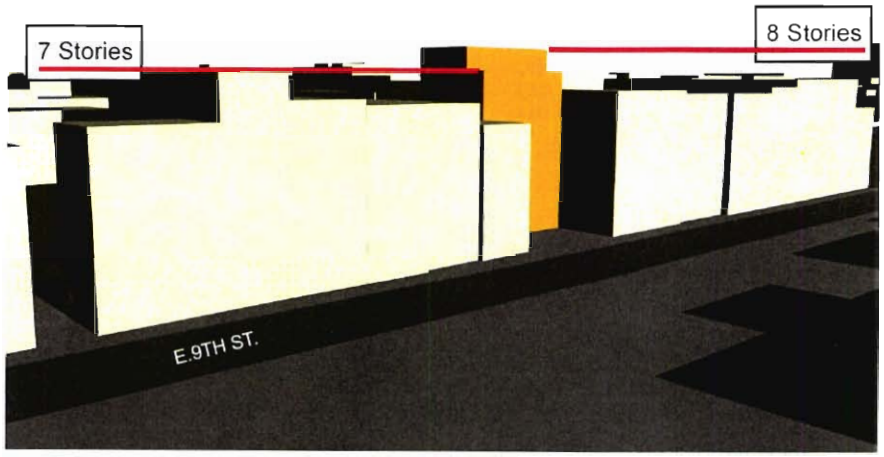
4.24.08



Existing R7-2

Community Facility FAR: 6.5

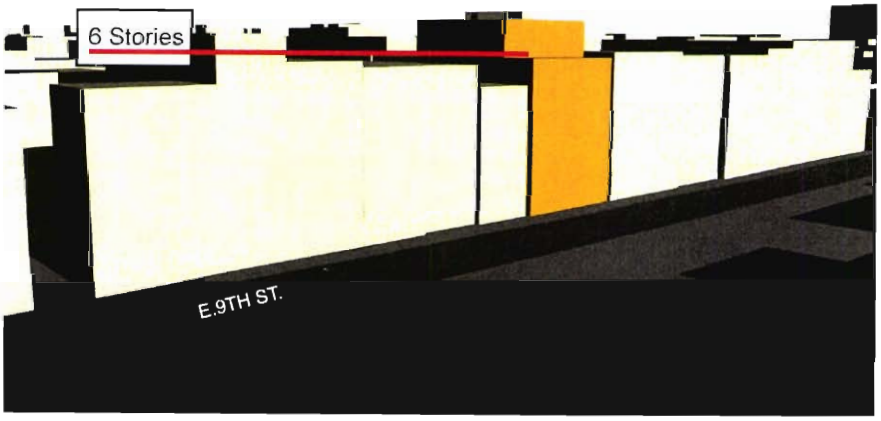
(Streetwall greater than 45 feet makes Sliver Rule inapplicable)



Existing R7-2

Residential FAR: 3.44

(Streetwall greater than 45 feet makes Sliver Rule inapplicable)



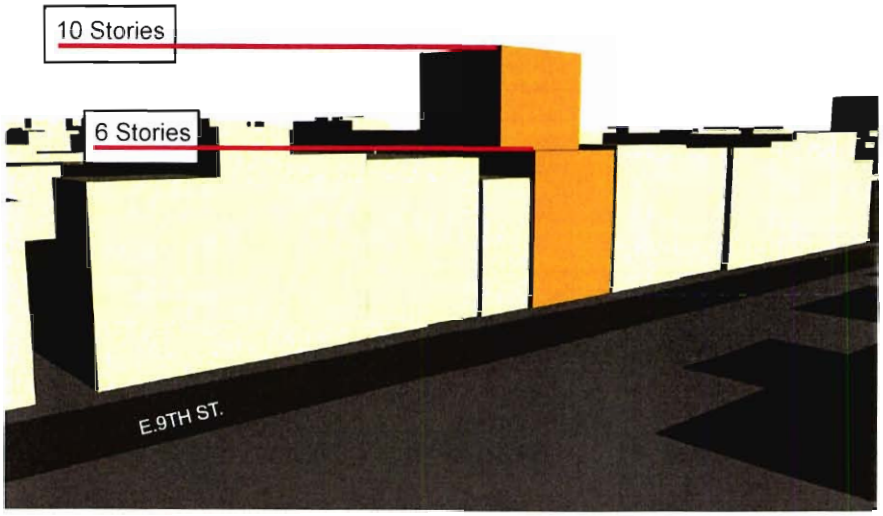
Proposed R8B

Residential FAR: 4.0
55-foot to 60-foot Streetwall
75-foot Maximum Height

(Sliver Rule applies if Streetwall is greater than 45 feet)

Zoning Framework:
Building Form R8B Zoning District (No Sliver Rule)
Figure 8-27a

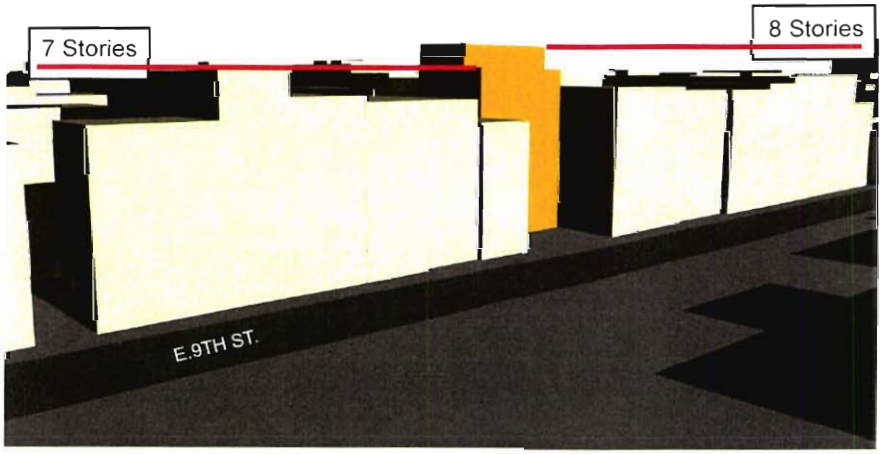
4.24.08



Existing R7-2

Community Facility FAR: 6.5

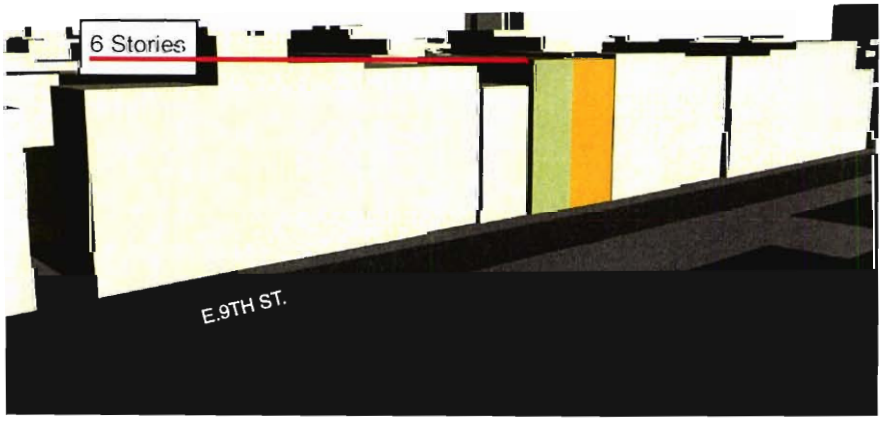
(Streetwall greater than 45 feet makes Sliver Rule inapplicable)



Existing R7-2

Residential FAR: 3.44

(Streetwall greater than 45 feet makes Sliver Rule inapplicable)



Proposed R8B

Residential FAR: 4.0
55-foot to 60-foot Streetwall
75-foot Maximum Height

(Sliver Rule limits buildings to 60 feet)

Zoning Framework:
Building Form R8B Zoning District (Sliver Rule)
Figure 8-27b

sites could include regrading, there would be no overall affects to topography, which is relatively level throughout the primary study area. As described above, there are no natural resources in the primary study area. As such, the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to topography or natural features in the study area.

STREET PATTERN AND HIERARCHY

The proposed actions would not alter the street pattern and hierarchy within the primary study area.

BLOCK SHAPES AND BUILDING ARRANGEMENTS

The proposed actions would not alter block shapes and building arrangements within the primary study area. Development pursuant to the proposed actions would occur on existing blocks and lots, and the site plans and footprints of new buildings would be in keeping with the varied building arrangements in the primary study area. As discussed in "Streetscape and Building Bulk, Use and Type" below, buildings as a result of the RWCDS would conform to proposed contextual zoning streetwall requirements. Therefore, the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to block shapes and building arrangements in the study area.

STREETSCAPE AND BUILDING BULK, USE AND TYPE

East Village Subarea

Streetscape. As discussed in "Existing Conditions" above, the East Village subarea streetscape is urban in character, comprised mostly of four- to six-story attached residential buildings—forming continuous streetwalls—with street-level retail uses on both local east-west streets and the major north-south avenues. The proposed actions, which include zoning map and text amendments tailored to existing urban design character (the streetscapes along local and major streets differ), would require new development in this area to conform to this existing urban design character. New residential buildings would be built as per zoning requirements on vacant or otherwise under-utilized properties, thus creating streetscapes lined with buildings of consistent heights and continuous streetwalls, a desirable attribute of this neighborhood. Retail uses are anticipated on the ground floors of these buildings—including zoning text amendments to protect non-complying retail uses in residential zoning districts—to maintain an active streetscape that is characteristic of this neighborhood as a whole. The proposed actions would not eliminate or diminish open spaces or any other attribute of this subarea's streetscape.

Building Bulk, Use and Type. As discussed in "Streetscape" above, the proposed zoning map and text amendments would be tailored to existing urban design character. New residential buildings constructed as part of the RWCDS would conform to zoning requirements in terms of building bulk, use, and type set forth by the proposed actions. The underlying zoning of the East Village subarea is predominantly residential and would continue to be so in the future with the proposed actions. With the exception of the Village View housing development along First Avenue between East 2nd and East 6th Streets (the development was not rezoned), residential buildings throughout this subarea primarily take the form of low- to mid-rise attached buildings with street-level retail.

The proposed rezoning in this subarea would require mandatory streetwalls and setbacks that conform to the predominant urban design character of this neighborhood. The required base streetwall heights for new midblock buildings would be 55 to 60 feet, which is comparable to a

six-story rowhouse building. The maximum midblock building height would 75 feet with a setback to limit the visibility of its upper portion. The new development along wide streets would also be built to the existing context; the proposed rezoning along First Avenue, Second Avenue (north of East 3rd Street), and Avenue A would result in residential buildings with base streetwall heights between 40 and 65 feet and maximum building heights of 80 feet (see Figure 8-26). New buildings along East Houston Street and Second Avenue (south of East 3rd Street) would be built to a maximum height of 120 feet with base streetwall heights between 60 and 85 feet, similar to that of recent development along wide streets in this area.

As a result of the proposed actions, the RWCDS identifies a number of enlargement sites, which represents properties that would add a one- or two-story addition to existing structures as a result of an increase in the amount of permitted floor area. New structures on these enlargement sites, most of which are potential sites and less likely to be developed, would still comply with building bulk, use, and type set forth by the proposed zoning actions and would not differ appreciably from new development in terms of urban design.

Overall, development as a result of the proposed actions would be of similar building bulk, use, and type of the existing East Village subarea. In addition, the proposed actions would include provisions to protect the streetscape characteristics that embody the entire East Village neighborhood. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts to the urban design of this subarea.

Alphabet City Subarea

Streetscape. As discussed in "Existing Conditions" above, the streetscape of the Alphabet City subarea is similar to that of the East Village subarea with differences in terms of street activity—which is limited primarily to the avenues in the Alphabet City subarea, limited retail use along local east-east streets, and a lesser number of streets with continuous streetwalls due to properties without on-site buildings. The proposed actions would have a similar effect in this subarea as in the East Village subarea to the west, which would require new development in this area to conform to this existing urban design character. As such, new residential buildings would be built as per zoning requirements and retail uses would be concentrated along Avenues A through D (although non-complying retail uses in residential zoning districts would be preserved). The proposed actions would not eliminate or diminish open spaces or any other attribute of this subarea's streetscape, thus preserving the numerous community gardens found in this subarea—especially east of Avenue B—that comprise an important aspect of this subarea's urban design character.

Building Bulk, Use and Type. Similar to the proposed changes in the East Village subarea, new residential buildings and enlargements to existing buildings constructed as part of the RWCDS would conform to zoning requirements in terms of building bulk, use, and type set forth by the proposed actions. The Alphabet City subarea would continue to be a predominantly low- to mid-rise residential area.

New development would conform to the predominant urban design character of this neighborhood; the proposed rezoning would result in the construction of shorter buildings (mandatory streetwall heights of 55 to 60 feet and maximum building heights of 75 feet) along local east-west streets and slightly taller buildings along Avenues A, B, and C (base streetwall heights between 40 and 65 feet and maximum building heights of 80 feet; see Figures 8-27a and 8-27b). The tallest buildings in the Alphabet City subarea would be located along East Houston Street and Avenue D, adjacent to a wide street and high-density residential development,

respectively. New buildings along East Houston Street and Avenue D would be built to a maximum height of 120 feet with base streetwall heights between 60 and 85 feet. The proposed actions also include the disposition of Projected Development Site 167, located at 302 East 2nd Street at the intersection of Avenue D and East 2nd Street. This building would have an entrance on East 2nd Street. The building would be 13 stories tall and clad in glass and steel, with balconies on the East 2nd Street side, and staggered terraces at the 11th, 12th, and 13th floors on both the East 2nd Street and Avenue D sides. The entrance to the building would be on East 2nd Street. The building would have ground-floor retail spaces. Street trees would be provided along East 2nd Street and Avenue D (see Figures 8-28 and 8-29).

Overall, new residential buildings and enlargements to existing buildings constructed as part of the RWCDS would be of similar building bulk, use, and type of the existing Alphabet City subarea and the proposed actions would not result in out-of-scale development. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts to the urban design of this subarea.

Bowery Subarea

Streetscape. The well-used Sara D. Roosevelt Park, an approximately 150-foot-wide linear park extending from Canal Street to East Houston Street between Chrystie and Forsyth Streets, is the most defining streetscape feature in the Bowery subarea. Outside of this linear park, the streetscape in this subarea is characterized by wide streets lined with mostly low- to mid-rise buildings of varying heights and styles with limited street-level retail and limited pedestrian activity. New residential buildings would be built as per zoning requirements on under-utilized properties, thus creating streetscapes lined with buildings of more consistent heights and continuous streetwalls (see discussion under "Building Bulk, Use and Type" below").

It is expected that street activity and pedestrian traffic would increase along this subarea's streetscapes in the future with the proposed actions. New residential buildings with street-level retail constructed as part of the RWCDS would replace under-utilized light manufacturing and other non-retail commercial uses in this subarea—especially along Chrystie Street, enlivening the streetscape adjacent to Sara D. Roosevelt Park.

Building Bulk, Use and Type. As discussed in "Existing Conditions" above, buildings in the Bowery subarea vary widely in terms of bulk, use, and type. For the most part, the proposed actions would restrict the overall heights of new buildings and result in additional residential uses to the Bowery subarea. The proposed rezoning in this subarea would not result in a substantial difference in developable floor area or use and type of development permitted in this area, but would require mandatory streetwall and total building heights. Current zoning has no minimum streetwall requirement and building heights are regulated by sky exposure planes and are thus dependent on zoning lot dimensions as opposed to maximum building height regulations.

In general, new residential buildings constructed as part of the RWCDS would be built with mandatory streetwall heights of 40 to 65 feet and maximum building heights of 80 feet (see Figure 8-30). New buildings along Chrystie and Delancey Streets would be built to a maximum height of 120 feet with base streetwall heights between 60 and 85 feet. The effects of the proposed actions—buildings of more consistent heights and continuous streetwalls—would be most evident along Chrystie Street, where building heights currently range from two to nine stories and lack streetwall continuity.

The proposed actions would result in development of more consistent urban design character and eliminate the potential for future out-of-scale development. The new residential buildings with

street-level retail concentrated along Chrystie Street (and to a much lesser extent, Allen Street) would enliven the streetscape in this subarea, replace some of less desirable light manufacturing and other commercial uses, and provide a more appropriate setting for Sara D. Roosevelt Park. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts to the urban design of the Bowery subarea.

Lower East Side Subarea

Streetscape. The active streetscape in the Lower East Side subarea would not change in the future with the proposed actions. The defining street-level commercial character would remain and much of the anticipated development as part of the RWCDS would be concentrated along East Houston and Delancey Streets. The new residential buildings along these major streets would have street-level retail, increasing street activity. The streetscape in the northeast corner of this subarea near East Houston and Attorney Streets would change notably in the future with the proposed actions as mid-rise residential buildings (with street-level retail along major traffic corridors) would replace the light manufacturing uses in this area—including the small enclave of one-story auto repair shops is located on Attorney Street between East Houston and Stanton Streets. The proposed actions would not eliminate or diminish open spaces or any other attribute of this subarea's streetscape.

Building Bulk, Use and Type. The Lower East Side subarea has been the subject of the most intense redevelopment when compared with the other subareas that comprise the primary study area. The building types in this (Lower East Side) subarea most resemble buildings north of East Houston Street. However, recent higher-density residential and hotel development has begun to change the low- to mid-rise character of this neighborhood. The proposed actions would permit this trend to continue but in a more contextual manner. The subarea west of Essex Street would be rezoned for commercial use to protect existing uses in this area (residential uses would also be permitted); higher-density residential and commercial uses would be permitted along East Houston and Delancey Streets. As noted in "Streetscape" above, the new residential buildings built as part of the RWCDS would be constructed to the bulk and scale common to the overall neighborhood, replacing light industrial and other under-utilized uses with buildings and uses more compatible with current trends.

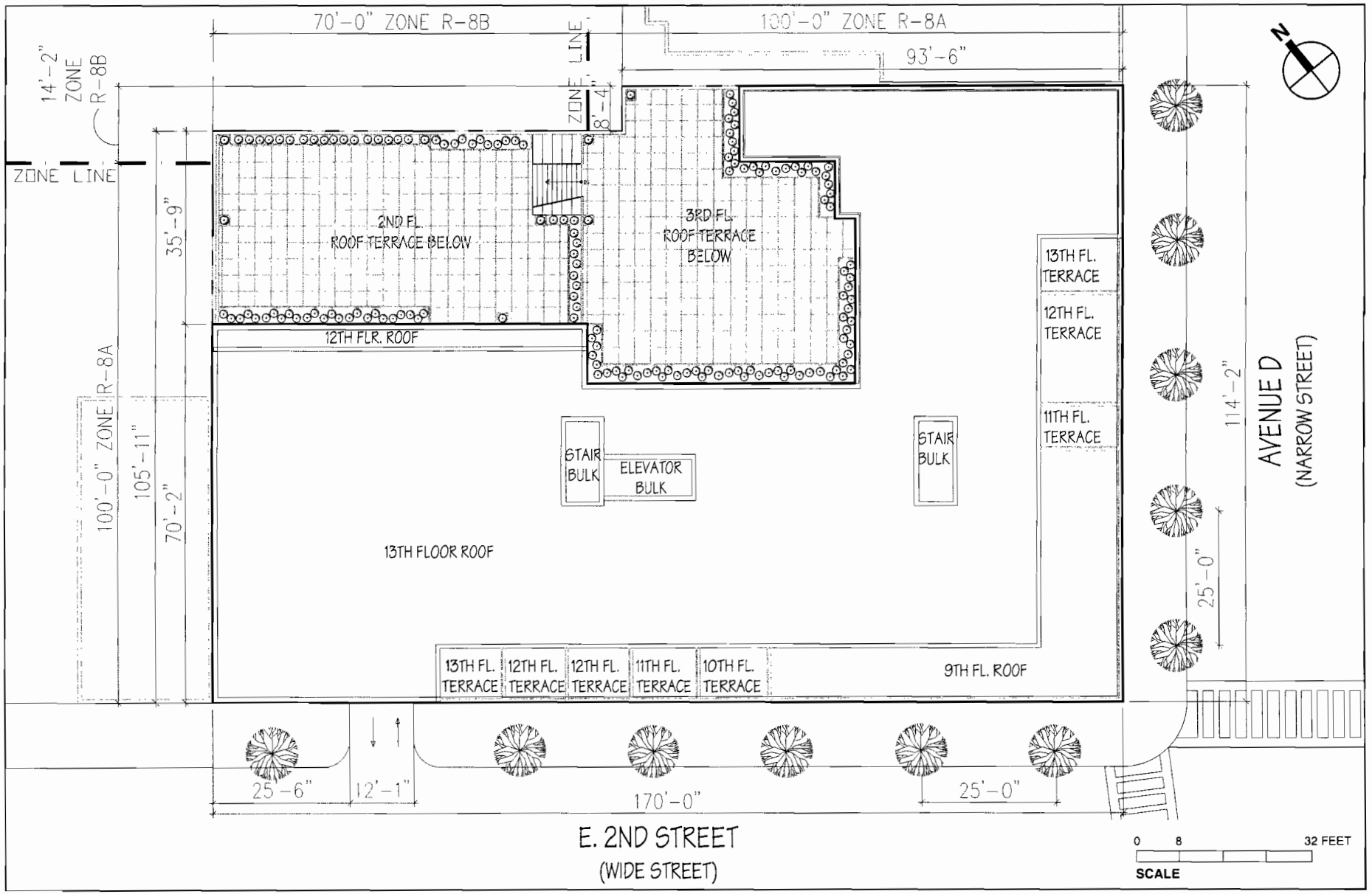
The proposed rezoning in this subarea would not result in a substantial difference in developable floor area or use and type of development permitted in this area, but would require mandatory streetwall and total building heights. Current zoning has no minimum streetwall requirement and building heights are regulated by sky exposure planes and are thus dependent on zoning lot dimensions as opposed to maximum building height regulations. In general, new residential buildings constructed as part of the RWCDS would be built with mandatory streetwall heights of 40 to 65 feet and maximum building heights of 80 feet. New buildings along East Houston and Delancey Streets would be built to a maximum height of 120 feet with base streetwall heights between 60 and 85 feet, similar to that of recent development along wide streets in this area (see Figure 8-31).

As a result of the proposed actions, the RWCDS identifies a number of enlargement sites, which represents properties that would add a one- or two-story addition to existing structures as a result of an increase in the amount of permitted floor area. New structures on these enlargement sites, most of which are potential sites and less likely to be developed, would still comply with building bulk, use, and type set forth by the proposed zoning actions and would not differ appreciably from new development in terms of urban design.

4.30.08

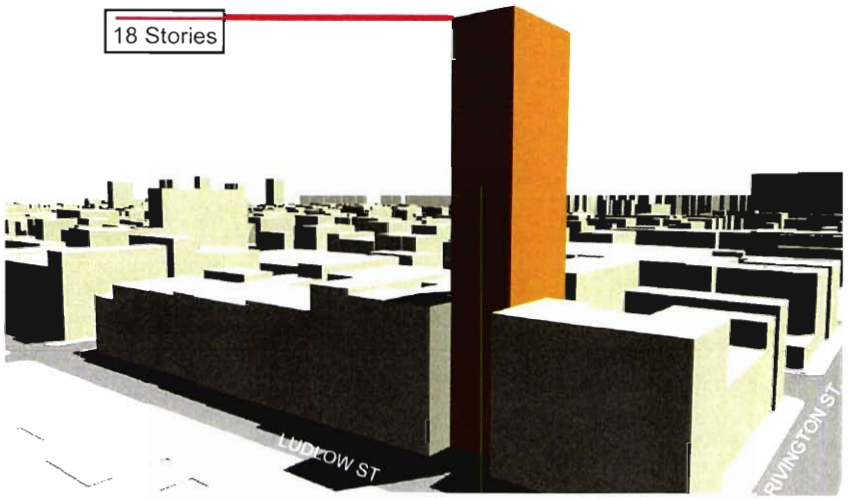


Projected Development Site 167
Figure 8-28



Projected Development Site 167 Site Plan
Figure 8-29

4.30.08

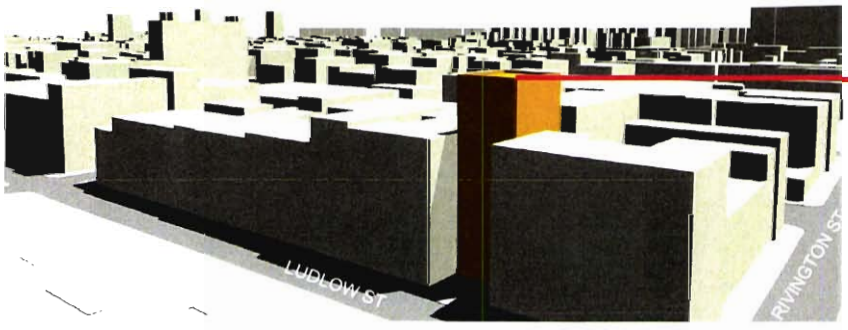


Existing C6-1

Community Facility FAR: 6.0

Existing C6-1

Residential FAR: 3.44



Proposed C4-4A

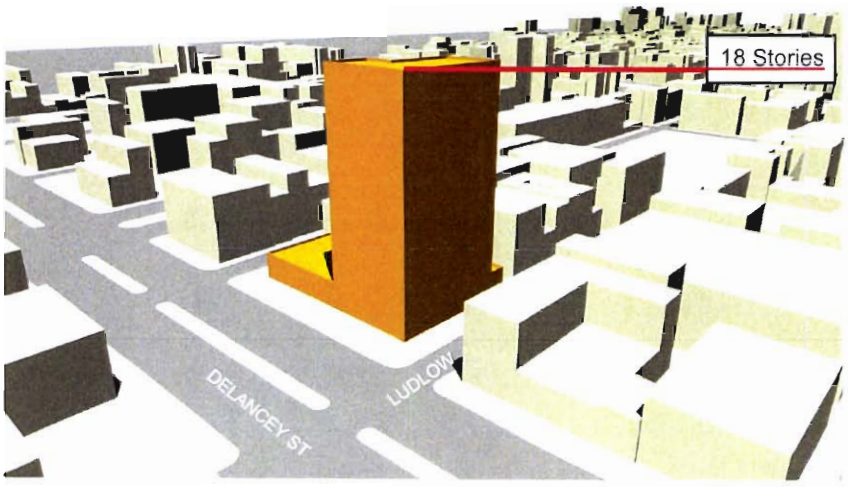
Residential FAR: 4.2

40-foot to 65-foot Base
80-foot Maximum Height



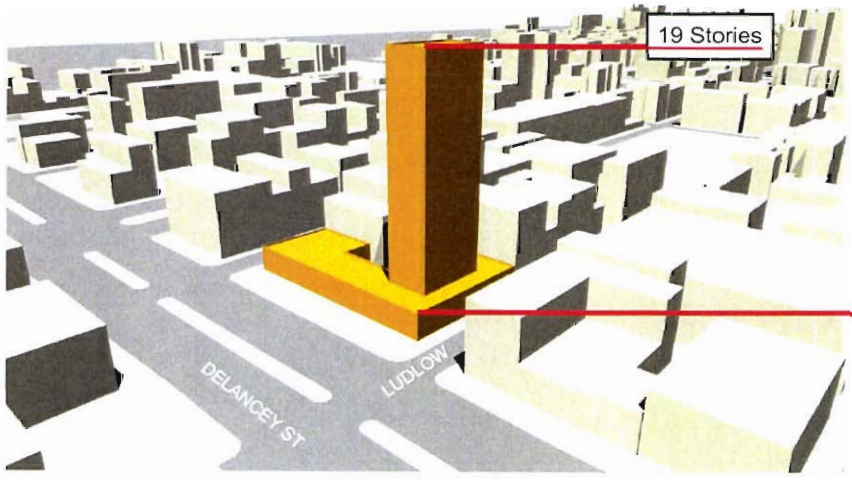
Zoning Framework:
Building Form C4-4A Zoning District
Figure 8-30

4.31.08



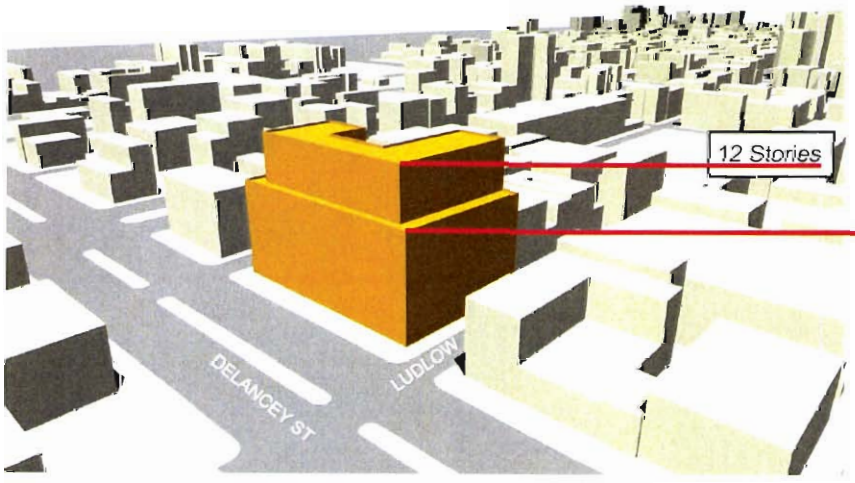
Existing C6-1

Community Facility FAR: 6.0



Existing C6-1

Residential FAR: 3.44



Proposed C6-2A

Residential FAR: 7.2
(Inclusionary Housing Maximum)
60-foot to 85-foot Base
120-foot Maximum Height

Zoning Framework:
Building Form C6-2A Zoning District
Figure 8-31

Overall, development as a result of the proposed actions would be of similar building bulk, use, and type of the existing Lower East Side subarea. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts to the urban design of this subarea.

VISUAL RESOURCES

For the most part, the proposed actions would not result in any visual and contextual impacts to the majority of historic resources. As all of the new buildings that could be developed under the RWCDS for the proposed actions would be residential and commercial structures of heights and bulk consistent with those urban design features of the area, the proposed actions would not introduce any incompatible visual, audible, or atmospheric elements to the settings of historic resources. As discussed in "Existing Conditions" above, the primary study area is characterized by a variety of older, mostly masonry-faced low-rise buildings and newer residential buildings, many with primarily glass curtain walls. New residential buildings as a result of the proposed actions would fit into this context in terms of both scale and varied architectural style. The mandatory streetwall requirements of the proposed rezoning would further define view corridors in the primary study area, which are generally long due to the relative straightness of the streets, flat topography, and the area's low-rise character.

The historic resources in the project area include a range of buildings of various types, sizes, and styles and the proposed actions aim to encourage the design of new development that is in character with the area. Views of Tompkins Square Park, Sara D. Roosevelt Park, and views east along Delancey Street toward the Williamsburg Bridge would be framed by new contextual development. There are no new buildings proposed along the Stuyvesant Street view corridor; therefore, this visual resource and its contextual setting with St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery would remain unchanged in the future with the proposed actions. Publicly accessible views of resources would not be blocked, because all new development would occur on existing blocks and lots and maximum building heights would be limited to be compatible with existing building heights in the primary study area. These height limits would preserve views of the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer on East 3rd Street and its 250-foot-tall tower. Therefore, the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on the visual resources in the study area.

F. CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposed actions and its associated projected and potential development would not have significant adverse impacts on the urban design and visual resources of the primary study area. There would be no changes to topography, natural features, street hierarchy, block shapes, or building arrangements.

The proposed actions and any subsequent development would affect the streetscape and building use, bulk, and type of the primary study area. The study area's streetscape would retain its active character and new active uses in the form of residential buildings with street-level retail would enliven the streetscapes in portions of study area where vacant and under-utilized properties exist currently. These new residential buildings and enlargements to existing buildings would reinforce existing residential streetscape patterns. The proposed zoning map and text amendments would also preserve the existing commercial character of certain shopping streets, including St. Mark's Place and streets within the Bargain District.

In terms of building bulk, use and type, the new buildings as part of the RWCDS would be built to the existing low- to mid-rise character of the neighborhood as a whole. These new residential

buildings would be built with mandatory streetwall heights of 40 to 65 feet along local streets and 60 to 85 feet along wide streets. Overall building heights of 75 to 80 feet along local streets and 120 feet along wide streets would prevent additional out-of-scale developments from being built in the future, as in the case on the Lower East Side neighborhood south of East Houston Street.

New buildings that could be developed under the RWCDS for the proposed actions would be residential and commercial structures of heights and bulk consistent with those urban design features of the area and built on existing blocks and lots. These new buildings would not block any significant view corridors and views of visual resources or limit access to any visual resources, including views of Tompkins Square Park, Sara D. Roosevelt Park, and views east along Delancey Street toward the Williamsburg Bridge, and the mandatory streetwall requirements of the proposed rezoning would further define view corridors in the primary study area, which are generally long due to the relative straightness of the streets, flat topography, and the area's low-rise character. The proposed height limits would preserve views of the taller visual resources in the area. No new development would occur in the St. Mark's Historic District, preserving the views along Stuyvesant Street and of the St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery. Therefore, the proposed actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on the visual resources in the study area. ✷