Chapter 18: Neighborhood Character

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Project on neighborhood character. As defined in the *2021 City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, neighborhood character is a combination of elements that give a neighborhood its distinct "personality," which may include land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, shadows, transportation, and/or noise conditions, but not all of these elements contribute to neighborhood character in every case.

Under CEQR, an analysis of neighborhood character identifies the defining features of the neighborhood and then evaluates whether a proposed project has the potential to affect the defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in the aforementioned technical analysis areas. To determine the effects of a proposed project on neighborhood character, the defining features of neighborhood character are considered together. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, neighborhood character impacts are rare, and it would be unusual that—in the absence of a significant adverse impact in any of the relevant technical areas—a combination of moderate effects to the neighborhood would result in an impact to neighborhood character. Moreover, a significant adverse impact identified in one of the technical areas that contributes to a neighborhood's character does not necessarily constitute a significant impact on neighborhood character, but rather serves as an indication that neighborhood character should be examined.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Project includes the adaptive reuse of the vacant, approximately 588,765-gross-square-foot (gsf) Armory to provide up to approximately 735,800 gsf of new uses, including a mix of community facility and cultural space, light manufacturing space, commercial office space, a 17,000-person capacity live event venue, and other entertainment uses, along with parking and loading docks. The National Guard Site would be redeveloped with a new residential building (up to approximately 494,500 gsf) containing 500 new permanently affordable dwelling units (DUs) and approximately 14,400 gsf of ground floor retail, replacing a one-story garage and a two-story office building. The Proposed Project would include a total of up to approximately 1,230,300 gsf of development at the Project Site.

The Proposed Project would also create approximately 64,800 square feet (sf) of new, publicly accessible open space that would be largely concentrated in the areas southwest of the Armory along Reservoir Avenue and West Kingsbridge Road, but would also include areas along the west side of the Armory along Reservoir Avenue. The new open space would include approximately 5,100 sf that is currently within the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) right-of-way (ROW) but is closed to vehicular traffic and functions as an informal sidewalk extension. The design and maintenance of this

portion of the open space at the southwest corner of the Project Site is being developed in coordination with DOT. The new open space would provide a flexible design suitable for a variety of programming and users, such as farmers' markets, food vendors, concert patrons, and tour groups.

The assessment of neighborhood character was prepared in accordance with the guidance in *the CEQR Technical Manual*. This chapter describes the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and considers the potential effects of the Proposed Project on these defining features. This assessment relies on the technical analyses presented in other chapters of this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The assessment finds that the Proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character. The Proposed Project would enhance the neighborhood character of the study area by reinforcing the defining features of the neighborhood, which include the Armory itself, a New York City Landmark (NYCL) that is also listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR), and its mixed use, predominately residential and institutional uses found throughout the study area. The study area also contains a number of open spaces and the Jerome Park Reservoir.

The Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; community facilities; open space; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; and shadows. Although there would be significant adverse impacts with respect to transportation and noise, these impacts would not result in a significant adverse impact to the defining elements of neighborhood character.

B. METHODOLOGY

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an assessment of neighborhood character is generally needed when a proposed action has the potential to result in a significant adverse impact in any of the following technical areas: land use, socioeconomic conditions, open space, historic and cultural resources, urban design and visual resources, shadows, transportation, or noise. The *CEQR Technical Manual* states that even if a proposed action does not have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts in any specific technical area(s), an assessment of neighborhood character may be required if the project would result in a combination of moderate effects to several elements that may cumulatively affect neighborhood character. A "moderate" effect is generally defined as an effect considered reasonably close to the significant adverse impact threshold for a particular technical analysis area.

A preliminary assessment of neighborhood character determines whether changes expected in other technical analysis areas may affect a defining feature of neighborhood character. The preliminary assessment first identifies the defining features of the existing neighborhood character and then evaluates whether the proposed action has the potential to affect those defining features, either through the potential for a significant adverse impact or a combination of moderate effects in the relevant technical areas. If the project has the potential to affect defining features of a neighborhood, a detailed assessment of neighborhood character may be appropriate. Conversely, if a project has

no potential to affect the defining features of neighborhood character, a detailed assessment is not warranted.

The key elements that define neighborhood character, and their relationships to one another, form the basis of determining impact significance; in general, the more uniform and consistent the existing neighborhood context, the more sensitive it may be to change. A neighborhood that has a more varied context is typically able to tolerate greater change without experiencing a significant adverse impact related to neighborhood character.

STUDY AREA

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study areas for a preliminary assessment of neighborhood character are typically consistent with the study areas identified in the technical areas that contribute to the defining features of the neighborhood. As shown in **Figure 18-1**, the study area comprises the Project Site and the surrounding ¼-mile radius from the Project Site. The study area is roughly bounded by East 198th Street, the Jerome Park Reservoir and the midblock of the Lehman College campus to the north; Valentine Avenue and East Kingsbridge Road to the east; West 190th Street to the south; and Kingsbridge Terrace to the west.

C. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

DEFINING FEATURES

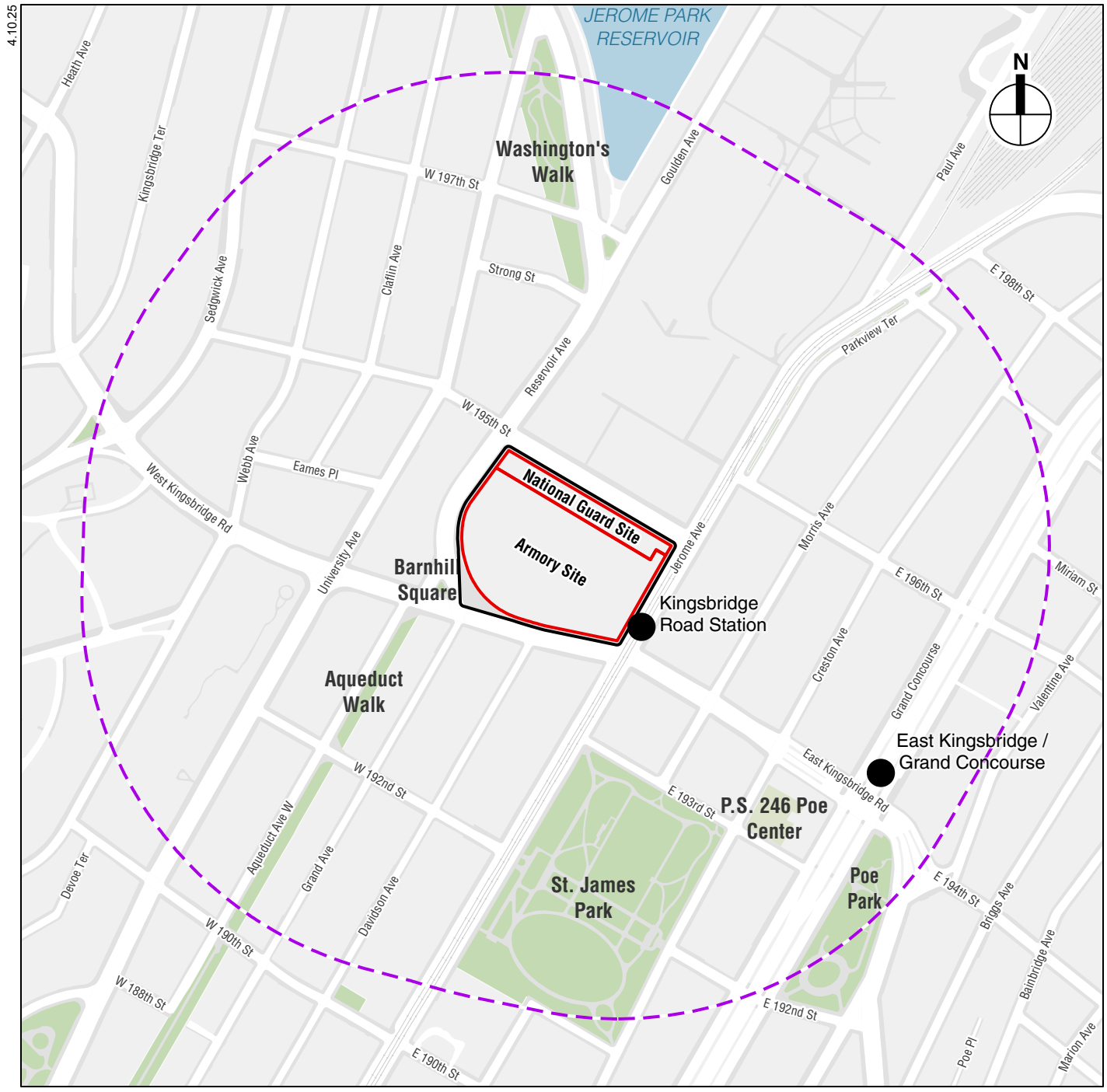
The character of Kingsbridge Heights is that of a predominately residential community with commercial uses and large institutional campuses nearby.

PROJECT SITE

The Project Site is largely defined and occupied by the vacant Armory, a NYCL that is also S/NR-listed. The one- and two-story National Guard buildings adjacent to the Armory's north façade have been determined non-contributing to the historic significance of the Armory. The Armory and the two National Guard buildings are surrounded by an approximately 10-foot-tall chain-link fence, contributing to the Project Site's underutilized appearance. The Armory, one of the largest (former) armories in the world, has a fortress-like design, is faced in red brick, and has multiple towers and decorative brick work. It is an architecturally-distinguished and prominent visual resource in the Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood. The Project Site includes paved parking and loading areas, a mature tree canopy, and small grassy areas located east and west of the Armory's main entrance on West Kingsbridge Road and between the National Guard buildings on West 195th Street.

STUDY AREA

The ¼-mile study area surrounding the Project Site is defined primarily by residential and institutional uses. The study area contains a mix of building types, sizes, heights, and shapes, including one- and two-story commercial buildings, two- and three-story detached and semi-detached houses, five- and six-story apartment buildings, and three- and four-story institutional buildings. Most of the building stock is older, although there have been some recent developments in the neighborhood, including two new buildings located directly east of the Project Site along Jerome Avenue. The 13-story building at



Neighborhood Character Study Area

2700 Jerome Avenue was completed in 2019 and contains 136 units of affordable housing, including 40 supportive housing units for formerly homeless families, and approximately 1,200 gsf of ground floor commercial space. Adjacent to the new residential building is KIPP Inquire Elementary School, a new, six-story charter school that opened in 2021.

North of the Project Site across West 195th Street is a superblock bounded by Reservoir Avenue to the west and Jerome Avenue to the east that includes three school campuses, and a college campus, and associated ballfields. Public School (P.S.) 86, Walton High School, and P.S. 340 are characterized by buildings with large footprints that are generally three to five stories in height and are faced in brick or stone. Walton High School is a singular academic building which comprises five schools, including the High School for Teaching and Professions, Discovery High School, the Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music, the Kingsbridge International High School, and the International High School for Liberal Arts. P.S. 86 also includes a one-story outbuilding for additional elementary school capacity. These institutions include ballfields and play areas for the elementary, middle, and high schools. The Lehman College campus is north of the schools and also contains three- to five-story masonry-faced buildings, has ballfields and courts, and walkways through the campus that connect the various academic buildings. Northwest of this superblock is the 94-acre Jerome Park Reservoir, which is inaccessible to the public.

In addition to the KIPP Inquire Elementary School, the area northeast and east of the Project Site includes other institutional uses such as a church, a community organization, and the Concord House, a residential development under the jurisdiction of the Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation and the University Heights Housing Program. The portion of Jerome Avenue north of East Kingsbridge Road is largely commercial but also includes larger, five- and six-story apartment buildings, some of which have ground-floor retail. Similarly, commercial uses are concentrated along East Kingsbridge Road, with some one-story commercial buildings and other mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail. East of the Project Site are larger apartment buildings interspersed with some two- and three- detached and semi-detached residential buildings. Larger apartment buildings are located on Grand Concourse.

The south side of West Kingsbridge Road, directly south of the Project Site across West Kingsbridge Road, is generally characterized by one- and two-story commercial buildings. Further west and east, Kingsbridge Road is generally lined with older, five- and six-story apartment buildings with ground floor retail, including beauty salons, restaurants, and supermarkets. The blocks south of West and East Kingsbridge Road are generally characterized by two- and three-story attached and detached residential buildings, and smaller institutional uses, including churches, day care facilities, and Jerome Station of the U.S. Post Office at 2549 Jerome Avenue. Monroe University is also located south of the Project Site along Jerome Avenue and West 190th Street at the south of the study area.

The area west of Reservoir Avenue and north of West Kingsbridge Road is largely residential, and contains a mix of brick- and stone-faced, two- to three-story attached and detached houses and five- to six-story, multi-unit apartment buildings. Two churches, a school, a branch of the public library, two daycare facilities and two open spaces are also in this part of the study area. West Kingsbridge Road west of Aqueduct Avenue West is characterized by large institutional uses, including a nursing home and a medical center.

There are a number of open spaces in the study area, including Barnhill Triangle located near the southwest corner of the Project Site. The small, triangular traffic island provides trees and benches and is bounded by West Kingsbridge Road and Reservoir Avenue. Washington's Walk—which is located south of the Jerome Park Reservoir and west of Reservoir Avenue—and Aqueduct Walk—which is along the east side of Aqueduct Avenue West between West Kingsbridge Road and West 190th Street—are both long, linear parks that provide walkways, landscaping, and benches. Washington's Walk also includes basketball courts, playgrounds, and fitness equipment. South of East Kingsbridge Road are St. James Park and the St. James Recreation Center on the east side of Jerome Avenue. The park includes ball courts, playgrounds, comfort stations, and a dog run, while the recreation center includes fitness equipment, classrooms, an auditorium, and other community amenities. Other open spaces include Poe Park, which includes a playground, a visitor center and public restrooms, a gazebo, and the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage, a NYCL that is also S/NR-listed.

Jerome Avenue and West/East Kingsbridge Road are the primary thoroughfares and retail corridors in the study area and are located adjacent to the Project Site to the east and south, respectively. Jerome Avenue is characterized by the columns of the elevated No. 4 train subway platform and viaduct; West/East Kingsbridge Road, a primary east-west street, is a wide thoroughfare that carries multi-lane, two-way traffic. Another thoroughfare in the study area is the Grand Concourse in the eastern portion of the study area. Grand Concourse is a five-lane, north-south street with a middle turning lane. The street also includes a one-lane service road in both directions with a shared bicycle lane, buffered by a landscaped median and parking. The B/D subway line runs below Grand Concourse, with access to the Kingsbridge Road Station on the northwest and northeast corners of the Grand Concourse and East Kingsbridge Road intersection.

ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL TO IMPACT DEFINING FEATURES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The sections below discuss potential changes resulting from the Proposed Project in the 2032 analysis year with respect to the following technical areas that are considered in the assessment of neighborhood character: land use, zoning, and public policy; socioeconomic conditions; open space; shadows; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; transportation; and noise. The assessment relies on conclusions from the respective chapters of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify whether the Proposed Project would result in any significant adverse impacts or moderate adverse effects in these technical areas and whether any such changes would have the potential to affect the defining features of neighborhood character. As described below, the Proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse impact to the defining elements of neighborhood character, nor would a combination of effects result in a significant adverse impact to a defining feature.

LAND USE, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY

Defining features of the neighborhood would not be adversely affected due to potential effects of the Proposed Project on land use, zoning, and public policy, either individually or in combination with potential impacts in other relevant technical areas discussed in this section.

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the Proposed Project would not have a significant adverse impact on land use, zoning, or public policy. The Proposed Project would not adversely affect the surrounding land uses, nor would it generate land uses on the Project Site that would be incompatible with the land uses, zoning, or public policy within the ¼-mile study area.

The Proposed Project would facilitate the adaptive reuse of the vacant Armory with approximately 735,800 gsf of new uses, including a mix of community facility and cultural space, light manufacturing space, commercial office space, a 17,000-person capacity live event venue, and other entertainment uses. The Proposed Project would also redevelop the National Guard Site with a new residential building (up to approximately 494,500 gsf) containing 500 permanently affordable DUs and approximately 14,400 gsf of ground floor retail. The Proposed Project would reactivate the formerly vacant Armory Site with new uses and redevelop the National Guard Site with a new residential building.

Adaptive reuse of the Armory would involve reconfiguration of the interior spaces, including the creation of two new levels above grade within the drill hall. Entrances to the live event venue and other entertainment uses would be located on all four building frontages to allow for safe and accessible entry and exit during an event, while all other uses would primarily be accessed from West Kingsbridge Road.

The proposed residential, commercial, and community facility uses would be comparable to existing and planned developments in the study area. While some of the proposed uses would be new to the area, the Proposed Project would enliven the vacant and fenced off Project Site with uses geared towards the community. In addition to the 17,000-person capacity live event venue, the space would be designed to support multiple uses and could be repurposed as sports fields or with other recreational uses on non-concert days. The Proposed Project would introduce uses to the Project Site that would be compatible with the neighborhood character of the study area.

Additionally, the Proposed Project would directly support several major City policies and was developed with the *Together for Kingsbridge* vision plan. The Proposed Project presents an opportunity to further City-wide planning goals, as expressed in *OneNYC/PlaNYC*, of promoting new development in areas that are well-served by public transportation and repurposing underutilized sites for public enjoyment with commercial and recreational uses. The Proposed Project also supports the *New New York: Making New Work for Everyone* plan by investing in public space, creating employment opportunities in areas near transit, establishing an anchor institution, and ensuring that workers have access to housing by increasing the housing supply.

Overall, the changes in land use associated with the Proposed Project would be in keeping with the neighborhood character of the Project Site and study area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character due to changes in land use, zoning, and public policy.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

As discussed in Chapter 3, "Socioeconomic Conditions," the Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts related to direct residential displacement, direct business displacement, indirect residential displacement, indirect business displacement, or effects on specific industries in the ¼-mile study area.

The Proposed Project would not directly displace residents, as the Project Site does not contain any residential dwelling units. The Proposed Project would also not result in significant adverse impacts due to direct business displacement, as the Armory is currently vacant. Additionally, it is assumed that in order to facilitate development on the Project Site, an agreement would be met in which the National Guard would voluntarily relocate operations. Given this, no further assessment is warranted.

The Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts due to indirect residential displacement. Under the Proposed Project, there would be an increment of up to 500 permanently affordable DUs above the No Action condition and a net increase of approximately 1,395 residents.[1] In aggregate, the residents of the affordable units resulting from the proposed project could have an average household income that would be similar to, but slightly above the average household income of the existing study area populations. While the Proposed Project could add a new population with a higher average household income as compared with existing study area households, the proposed population was not considered to be a size that could substantially alter the study area; additionally, there is already a readily observable trend toward new market-rate residential development in the study area. Average and median gross rents in the study area have increased since 2010. Further, the Proposed Project would only introduce permanently affordable DUs under the ELLA program, as compared to the future without the Proposed Project, in which no affordable housing would be developed.

The Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts from indirect business displacement due to increased rents. The Proposed Project would not add a new economic activity or add to a concentration of a particular sector of the local economy enough to significantly alter or accelerate existing economic patterns. The study area is an established mixed-use residential neighborhood with public and community institutions. While some of the uses introduced may be somewhat unique to the area, these uses would not be of a scale large enough to substantially alter market conditions in the surrounding neighborhood.

The Proposed Project would not displace any uses that directly support other businesses or bring customers to the study area. The Proposed Project's new residential and worker population would add to the customer base of local businesses, and the community facility, entertainment, and event venue space would draw new visitors to the study area, increasing economic activity.

The Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts from indirect business displacement due to market saturation. The Proposed Project would not introduce a substantial concentration of retail space at the Project Site as compared to existing conditions.

The Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts due to adverse effects on specific industries. The Proposed Project would not result in the direct displacement of any businesses, nor would the Proposed Project introduce substantial new commercial uses that could indirectly displace businesses through increased rents or retail market saturation.

[1] The estimated number of incremental residents is based on the average household size for Bronx Community District (CD) 7, per the 2020 Decennial Census (2.79 people per DU).

OPEN SPACE

The Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts to publicly accessible open space and therefore would not adversely affect the defining features of the neighborhood.

The Proposed Project would not have a direct effect on any open space. In terms of indirect effects, within the ½-mile study area the Project Site there would be an increase in the total and passive open space ratios, and a 1.66 percent decrease in the active open space ratio. Within the ¼-mile study area, the Proposed Project would result in a decrease in the passive open space ratio for the combined non-residential and residential study area, but the passive open space ratio would remain well above the City's goal.

The Proposed Project would result in the development of new open space on the Project Site. The open space area that would be improved with the Proposed Project would total approximately 1.49 acres of passive open space on land that is currently vacant and inaccessible to the public. While the open space analysis assumes that all of the new open space would be passive, portions would be able to accommodate active outdoor pursuits, such as jogging, fitness classes (e.g., salsa, yoga) or pop-up recreational activities such as ping pong tournaments and pickle ball. The proposed open space would feature a flexible design suitable for both active and passive recreation and would accommodate a variety of programming and users (e.g., farmers' markets, food vendors, concert patrons, and tour groups).

In addition, the Proposed Project would include approximately 60,800 sf of active recreation space inside the Armory that would be utilized by local schools and also made available to the general public at certain times. The space would be designed to accommodate a variety of sports. As the details of the Proposed Project's design and operation progress, the days/hours that the space would be publicly accessible would be determined.

The proposed residential building is being designed to include a fitness center accessible to tenants. The on-site space, which would be approximately 2,000 gsf, would work toward addressing the active recreational needs of the new residential population generated by the Proposed Project.

Therefore, the Proposed Project would not create a significant adverse impact on neighborhood character related to open space.

SHADOWS

As described in Chapter 6, "Shadows," the Proposed Project would not cast incremental shadows on sunlight-sensitive resources in the vicinity of the Project Site. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts on neighborhood character as a result of shadows.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

As described in Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources," the Armory is a NYCL and subject to the review and approval of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and would require a Binding Report from LPC pursuant to the City Charter and the City's Landmarks Law. LPC's determination of the appropriateness of

the proposed modifications to the landmark site—which includes both the Armory Site and the National Guard Site—and the issuance of a Binding Report would ensure that the Proposed Project would not adversely affect the historic character of the Armory.

It is also anticipated that the Proposed Project may involve federal historic preservation tax credits. As a condition for receiving such tax credits, the Proposed Project would be required to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, as interpreted by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and the National Park Service (NPS), thereby ensuring that the Proposed Project would not adversely affect the Armory. In addition, the potential use of Federally-appropriated Community Project Funding administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Proposed Project would require consultation with the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Federally-recognized Tribal Nations in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Furthermore, there would be preparation and implementation of a Construction Protection Plan (CPP) to avoid inadvertent demolition and/or construction-related damage from ground-borne construction period vibration, falling debris, collapse, etc. to the Armory.

Regarding indirect (contextual) impacts, the Proposed Project would not be expected to adversely affect the context of nearby architectural resources, as it would result in the renovation and reuse of a large underutilized historic structure. It would not result in the isolation of any architectural resource from its setting or visual relationship with the streetscape, or otherwise adversely alter a historic property's setting or visual prominence. The proposed changes to the Armory and the new building on the National Guard Site would be most visible from two architectural resources closest to the Project Site—Public School 86 and the Fordham Manor Reformed Church. The new building on the National Guard Site would be taller than the Armory and would be a substantial new presence in views of Public School 86 along West 195th Street. The new building on the National Guard Site would also obscure some existing views of the Armory from Reservoir Avenue and West 195th Street; however, those existing views are of the rear of the building, not the primary façade facing West Kingsbridge Road. While the new residential building would be taller than the one- and two-story buildings it would replace on the National Guard Site, it would be located within a context that includes large, masonry-faced apartment buildings and other tall buildings, including the 124-foot-tall, 13-story residential building at 2700 Jerome Avenue and the KIPP Inquire Elementary School at 2720 Jerome Avenue directly east of the Project Site. The other architectural resources in the study area are at greater distances from the Project Site and have limited physical or visual relationships with the Armory, they would not be adversely affected by the Proposed Project.

For the reasons presented above, the effects of the Proposed Project on the Armory and other historic resources in the study area would not result in a significant adverse impact to neighborhood character.

URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES

It is not expected that the Proposed Project would result in adverse impacts on the urban design of the study area. The proposed buildings on the Project Site would have beneficial effects on the pedestrian experience by redeveloping the vacant Armory and

two commercial buildings on the National Guard Site with active ground floor retail, community facility, office, and residential uses.

The adaptive reuse of the Armory would return this long-underutilized and vacant building to active uses that would enliven the Armory Site. The cleaning, repair, and restoration of the Armory would improve the building's overall appearance in the immediate surrounding area. The proposed alterations to the Armory would not affect the Armory's arrangement on the Project Site, and no new structures would be developed on the Armory Site. The Proposed Project also would not affect the bulk, form, or massing of the Armory, as there would be no significant additions to the exterior of the building. Entrances from the headhouse and on Jerome Avenue would be reopened, new entrances would be created on each façade, and the armory's west façade entrances would be reconfigured. These changes would not adversely affect the Armory's bulk, form, or massing. These alterations would activate the sidewalks adjacent to the Armory with new pedestrian activity that would enliven the Project Site.

The redevelopment of the National Guard Site with a new 16-story residential building with ground floor retail would add new active uses on West 195th Street that would enliven the sidewalks with activity associated with the residential building, ground floor retail, and a mid-block entrance to the Armory, thereby enhancing the pedestrian experience of urban design. The new residential building would also include setbacks along the West 195th Street façade, reducing the overall bulk at the pedestrian level. While the new residential building would be taller than the one- and two-story buildings it would replace, the new residential building would be located within a context that includes large, masonry-faced apartment buildings and other tall buildings, including the 124-foot-tall, 13-story residential building at 2720 Jerome Avenue east of the Project Site.

The cleaning, repair, and restoration of the Armory, a visual resource, and the proposed changes to the Armory Site would not adversely affect the visual prominence or views that include the Armory from nearby vantage points. The buildings on the National Guard Site are not visual resources. The redevelopment of the National Guard Site with a new, 16-story building would alter certain views to the Armory from the north. However, the new building is being designed with angled east and west ends recessed from the Armory's ends to maintain existing views to the Armory from vantage points to the east and west of the National Guard Site. The new residential building would not obscure or obstruct notable views to the Armory as the Armory's primary facades are its south façade on West Kingsbridge Road and its west and east facades on Reservoir Road and Jerome Avenue, respectively. The new residential building would not adversely affect these views. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not adversely affect views to visual resources or view corridors on the Project Site.

The reactivation of the Armory with new uses and new residential development on the National Guard Site would contribute to pedestrian activity on the Project Site and on the adjacent sidewalks, which would enhance the pedestrian experience of urban design. Further, the proposed new uses would be compatible with existing uses in the study area. In addition, the new publicly accessible open space would improve the pedestrian experience of the streetscape on and near the Project Site.

Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character as a result of urban design or visual resources.

TRANSPORTATION

The Project Site and surrounding neighborhood would continue to include busy pedestrian and vehicular thoroughfares, and neighborhood character would not be adversely affected due to effects of the Proposed Project on transportation. The character of the study area, like that of many mixed-use neighborhoods in the Bronx, is in part defined by the levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity that exist—the neighborhood contains roadways that carry relatively high volumes of traffic, including Jerome Avenue and Kingsbridge Road.

As discussed in Chapter 13, "Transportation," the Proposed project would result in several significant adverse traffic and pedestrian impacts. Specifically, the Proposed Project would cause significant adverse impacts at 25 study area intersections. Potential significant adverse pedestrian impacts are anticipated for 14 pedestrian analysis locations. Traffic/pedestrian capacity improvements and other measures that could potentially mitigate these significant impacts are described in Chapter 22, "Mitigation." While the Proposed Project may result in unmitigated traffic and/or pedestrian impacts, the increased presence of vehicles along area streets and additional pedestrians in the neighborhood resulting from the Proposed Project would not be such that there would be a significant change to the overall character of the neighborhood. Overall, the increased traffic and pedestrian volumes resulting from the Proposed Project would not result in an overall impact to neighborhood character.

NOISE

As discussed in Chapter 16, "Noise," noise levels in portions of the study area would increase in the future with the Proposed Project due to increased traffic. While the magnitude of the increase would be generally imperceptible to most listeners, the Proposed Project is predicted to result in a significant adverse noise impact at receptor site 2, which represents residences along Reservoir Avenue between West 195th Street and West Kingsbridge Road, during the Saturday evening time period (i.e., 6PM to 8PM) on event days. Specifically, in terms of CEQR noise exposure guidelines, the Proposed Project is predicted to have a 4.4 dBA incremental increase in noise levels at this receptor; however, noise levels at receptor site 2 would remain in "marginally acceptable" category. The analysis of noise due to traffic at this receptor will be refined further between the Draft and Final EIS, and the refined analysis may find that noise due to the Proposed Project would not rise to the level of a significant adverse impact. Additionally, possible mitigation measures would be explored by the Applicants in more detail between the DEIS and FEIS, in consultation with the lead agency, but could include an offer of receptor control measures (i.e., building façade improvement) for affected façades. As such, with mitigation measures in place, the predicted operational noise impact would be completely mitigated. Therefore, the increase in future noise levels associated with the Proposed Project due to increased traffic is not anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts to neighborhood character.

Additionally, noise exposure at newly introduced publicly accessible open space was determined to be greater than the threshold considered acceptable for "open space areas requiring serenity and quiet." However, it would be comparable to typical open space areas in New York City proximate to roadways and/or elevated rail lines. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impact on neighborhood character with respect to noise. ✷