Chapter 9: Urban Design and Visual Resources

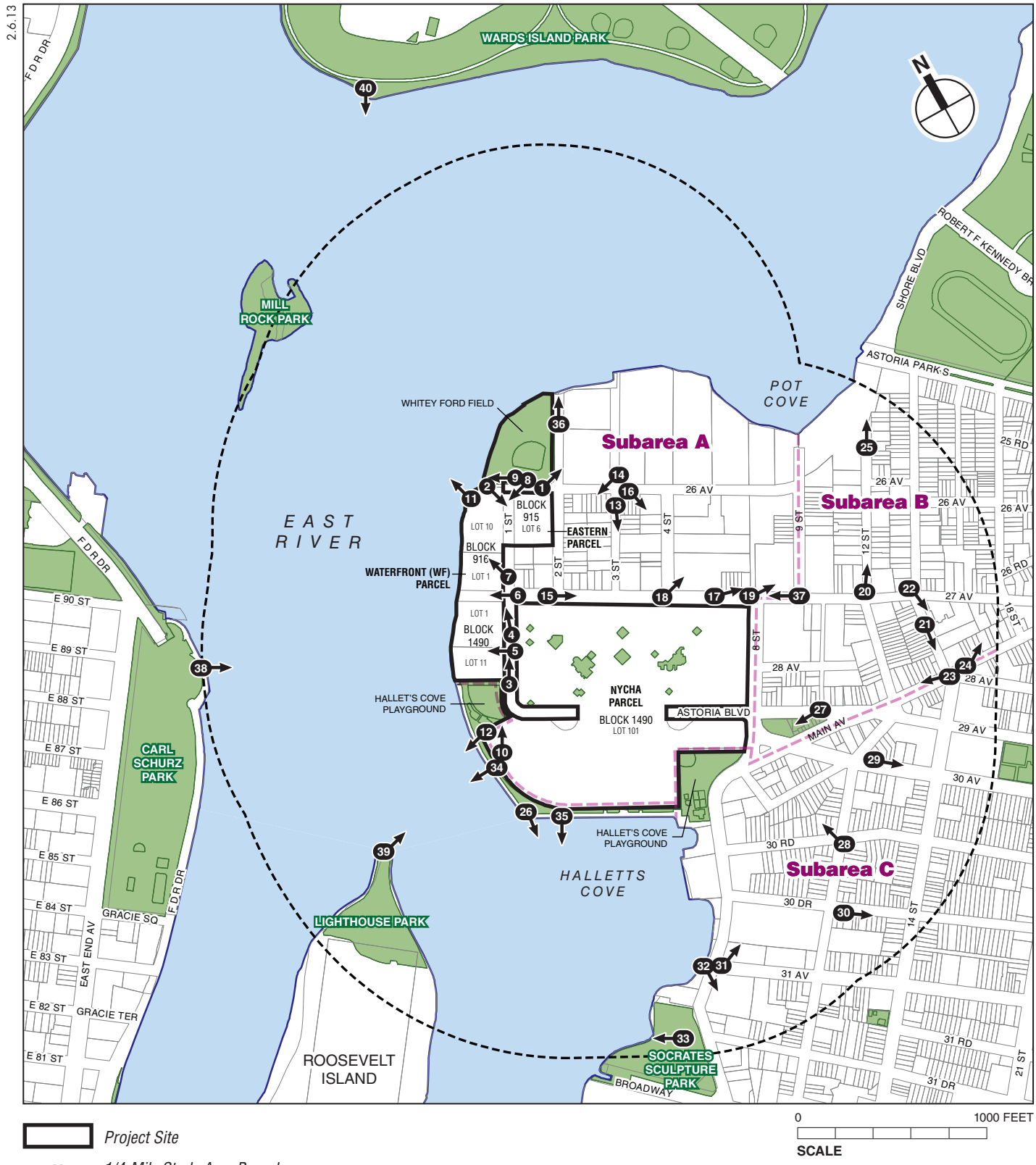
A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential of the proposed project to affect urban design and visual resources. As defined in the 2012 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, urban design is the totality of components that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space. A visual resource can include views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, or otherwise distinct buildings, and natural resources. Consistent with the land use study area, this analysis considers a ¼-mile study area (see **Figures 9-1 and 9-2**). Additional longer views from Wards Island are considered given the visibility of the project site from Wards Island Park. This analysis addresses the urban design and visual resources of the project site and study area for existing conditions and the future without and with the proposed project (the No Build and Build conditions, respectively) for the 2022 analysis year when the project is expected to be completed.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

Overall, while the proposed project would result in substantial changes to the urban design of the project site, it would not have significant adverse impacts related to urban design within the project site and study area. The proposed project would not alter the arrangement, appearance, or functionality of the project site such that the alteration would negatively affect a pedestrian's experience of the area. Rather, instead of a largely vacant and underutilized stretch of industrial and manufacturing buildings along 1st Street and the west end of 26th Avenue, the pedestrian would experience new buildings with active ground-floor uses, including retail. The proposed buildings on the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Parcel would also enliven the street with active ground-floor and retail uses. New publicly accessible open spaces along the demapped portions of 26th and 27th Avenues, the waterfront esplanade, and along other upland connections between the proposed buildings on the Waterfront (WF) Parcel along 1st Street would provide recreational areas and would visually enhance the experience of walking around the project site. These pedestrian areas and pathways would also provide access to a new waterfront esplanade proposed on the project site. Moreover, the proposed waterfront esplanade would provide a cohesive transition between the Hallet's Cove Playground and Esplanade south of the WF Parcel and Whitey Ford Field north of the WF Parcel.

The proposed project also would not obstruct views to visual resources in the study area. The proposed waterfront esplanade would provide new panoramic views of the Manhattan skyline and East River waterfront and islands that would not be provided in the future without the proposed project. These new views would be an improvement over the No Build condition, which would continue to include primarily vacant buildings and parking lots, with limited views through the project site to Manhattan. The proposed waterfront esplanade is also anticipated to improve views of the Halletts Point waterfront—including the project site—from Roosevelt Island, Wards Island, and the Manhattan waterfront by enlivening the waterfront area with open park space, trees, and landscaping. These views are also anticipated to be an improvement over



HALLETTS POINT

Urban Design and Visual Resources

Figure 9-1

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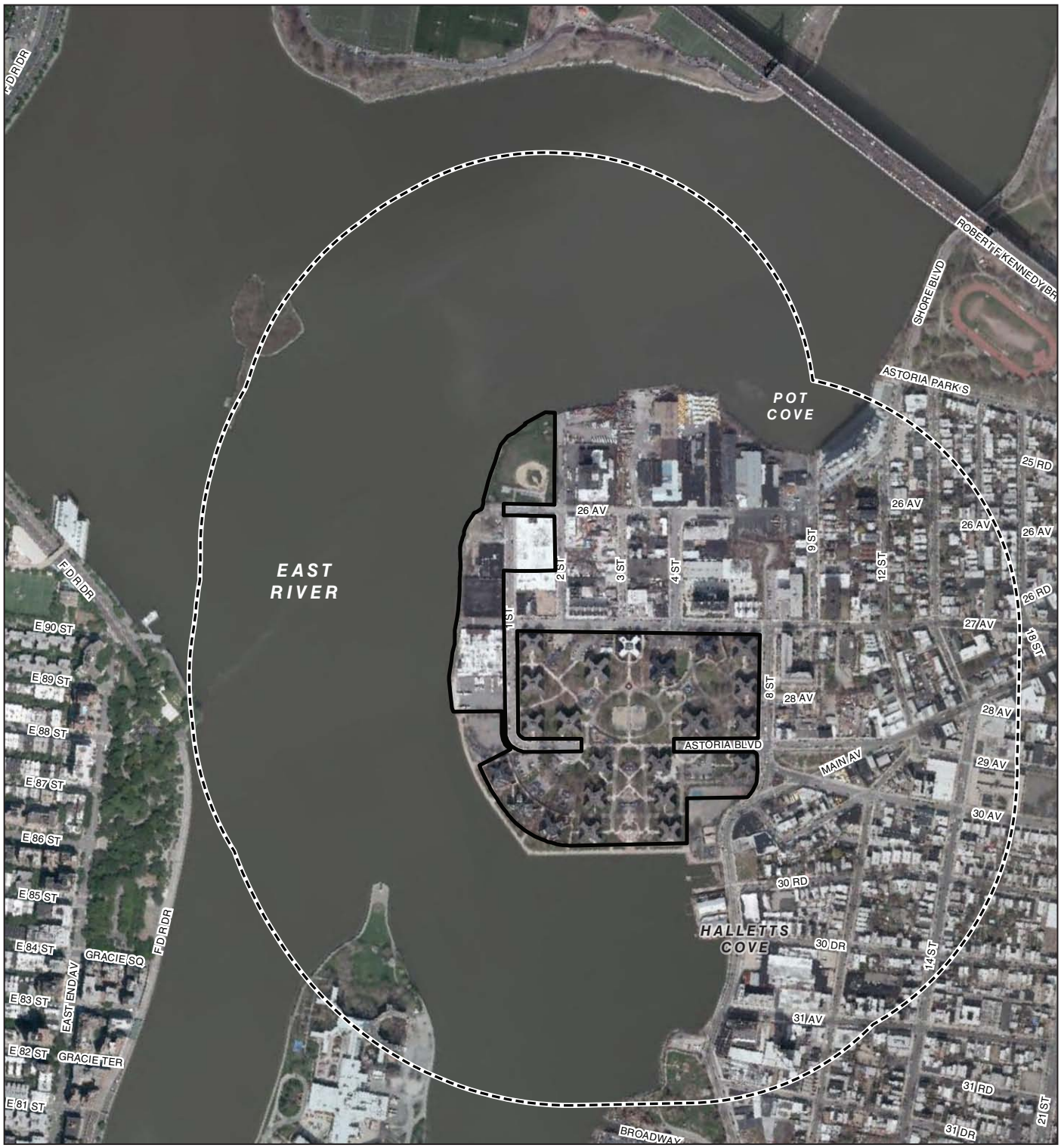

HALLETTS POINT

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Figure 9-2

the views of the waterfront in the No Build condition, which would consist of box-shaped industrial buildings, parking lots, and scruffy vegetation along the water's edge.

PEDESTRIAN WIND CONDITIONS

A pedestrian wind analysis was undertaken for the project site to assess whether the proposed project would result in channelized wind pressure from between buildings, or downwashed wind pressure from parallel buildings, that may cause winds that jeopardize pedestrian safety. The results of the wind tunnel analysis indicate that during the summer months (June through August) there is no potential for pedestrian wind conditions which exceed the safety criterion at any of the locations tested. During the winter months (December through February), the analysis indicates that there are up to 11 locations (out of a total of 70 analyzed locations) where pedestrian-level winds potentially exceed the safety criterion. The assessment of pedestrian-level wind effects was completed based on the current conceptual level of design of the proposed development at the project site. Actual effects would vary depending on the final design of the project that would be developed under the proposed actions. These conditions would be similar to conditions at comparable locations along the waterfront in Queens and elsewhere near the East River.

A number of measures have been incorporated into the proposed project to reduce or minimize the effects of winds at ground level, including requirements for podiums and setbacks and minimum requirements for landscaping. Overall, because the proposed project would incorporate these measures to reduce the effects of pedestrian winds and the modeling analysis indicates that exceedances would occur at a small number of locations only during the winter months (December through February), no significant adverse urban design impacts would result from potential pedestrian wind conditions.

To further address potential pedestrian wind conditions, similar additional measures could be incorporated into the final design of the project within the constraints of the zoning approvals that would reduce or eliminate the potential for the creation of pedestrian-level wind conditions that exceed the safety criterion. These measures could include additional evergreen, semi-evergreen or marcescent (deciduous trees that retain their leaves in the winter) tree plantings, or replacement of existing/proposed deciduous tree plantings with these plantings, to deflect and disperse wind gusts. The extent to which additional measures would be available to be incorporated into the final design of the buildings on the WF and Eastern Parcels would have to be balanced against urban design considerations of the project, including the goals of maximizing views of the East River. With these additional measures, no significant adverse urban design impacts would result from potential pedestrian wind conditions.

B. METHODOLOGY

As defined in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, urban design is the totality of components that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space and this detailed analysis considers the effects of the proposed project on the experience of a pedestrian in the study areas. The assessment focuses on those project elements that have the potential to alter the built environment, or urban design, of the project area, which is collectively formed by the following components:

- Streets—the arrangement and orientation of streets define location, flow of activity, street views, and create blocks on which buildings and open spaces are arranged. Other elements including sidewalks, plantings, street lights, curb cuts, and street furniture also contribute to an area's streetscape.

- Buildings—a building's size, shape, setbacks, pedestrian and vehicular entrances, lot coverage, and orientation to the street are important urban design components that define the appearance of the built environment.
- Visual Resources—visual resources include significant natural or built features, including important views corridors, public parks, landmarks structures or districts, or otherwise distinct buildings.
- Open Space—open space includes public and private areas that do not include structures including parks and other landscaped areas, cemeteries, and parking lots.
- Natural Features—natural features include vegetation, and geologic and aquatic features that are natural to the area.
- Wind—channelized wind pressure from between tall buildings and downwashed wind pressure from parallel tall buildings may cause winds that jeopardize pedestrian safety.

In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this analysis considers a ¼-mile study area that is coterminous with that of the land use, zoning, and public policy study area. Views of the project site from more distant locations are also considered. As noted above, this analysis addresses the urban design and visual resources of the project site and the study area for existing conditions, the future without the proposed project, and the future with the proposed project for 2022, when the project is expected to be completed. The first step in an urban design and visual analysis is a preliminary assessment, followed by a detailed analysis, if warranted by the preliminary assessment. The preliminary analysis is provided below.

With respect to pedestrian wind conditions, the analysis was conducted in a wind tunnel using a scale model of the proposed and existing buildings in the project area, the existing and future with the proposed project landscape elements, and surrounding buildings and topography within a 1,500 foot radius of the proposed project site. Receptors were placed both on and off-site, in areas where pedestrian activity would be expected.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources is appropriate when there is the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning. Examples include projects that permit the modification of yard, height, and setback requirements, and projects that result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be allowed 'as-of-right' or in the future without the proposed project. To facilitate the proposed development, the applicant is requesting a number of changes to existing zoning, including a rezoning, zoning map and text amendments, and zoning special permits. The zoning changes would permit the creation of a Large-Scale General Development (LSGD) as well as the modification of bulk, height, and setback requirements. Therefore, as the proposed development would be expected to result in physical alterations beyond that allowed by existing zoning, it meets the threshold for a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources.

The *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines state that if the preliminary assessment shows that changes to the pedestrian environment are sufficiently significant to require greater explanation and further study, then a detailed analysis is appropriate. Examples include projects that would potentially obstruct view corridors, compete with icons in the skyline, or make substantial alterations to the streetscape of a neighborhood by noticeably changing the scale of buildings. Detailed analyses also are generally appropriate for area-wide rezonings that include an increase in permitted floor area or changes in height and setback requirements, general large-scale

developments, or projects that would result in substantial changes to the built environment of a historic district or components of a historic building that contribute to the resource's historic significance. Conditions that merit consideration for further analysis of visual resources include when the project partially or totally blocks a view corridor or a natural or built visual resource and that resource is rare in the area or considered a defining feature of the neighborhood; or when the project changes urban design features so that the context of a natural or built visual resource is altered (i.e., if the project alters the street grid so that the approach to the resource changes; if the project changes the scale of surrounding buildings so that the context changes; or if the project removes lawns or other open areas that serve as a setting for the resource).

The proposed project would include an LSGD and would noticeably change the scale of buildings from the pedestrian point of view compared to the future without the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would meet the threshold for a detailed analysis of urban design and visual resources. This analysis is provided below.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

The project site comprises three parcels where development is proposed: the Eastern Parcel, the WF Parcel, and the NYCHA Parcel. These are described below and shown on **Figure 9-1**. Overall, the project site is relatively flat and does not contain any natural features or significant topographic features. The project site also includes Whitey Ford Field, a public open space; however, as discussed below no development would occur there. The 3.6-acre park is located in the northwest corner of the project site on the East River waterfront (see view 1 of **Figure 9-3**). The Hell Gate Field ballpark is located in Whitey Ford Field, in addition to bleachers, outdoor lighting equipment, and circuit fitness equipment.

Eastern Parcel

The Eastern Parcel consists of Lot 6 of Block 915 (see **Figure 9-1**). The lot is developed with an approximately 23-foot-tall brick building, half of which is used for manufacturing and the other half of which is vacant (see view 2 of **Figure 9-3**). The building has a large footprint and is approximately 55,000 gross square feet (gsf) in size. The 1st and 2nd Street facades each have a row of multi-pane windows at the roofline and a few street-level vehicular and pedestrian entrances enclosed with roll-down metal gates. The northwest portion of the façade along 26th Avenue has small windows on the first and second stories as well as multiple vehicular and pedestrian ground floor openings. The northeast portion of the 26th Avenue façade has no such openings.

WF Parcel

The WF Parcel contains Lots 1 and 11 of Block 490 and Lots 1 and 10 of Block 916 (see **Figure 9-1**). Block 490 contains an approximately 43,000-sf paved parking area and an approximately 53,000 gsf one- and two-story brick construction storage building at the southwest corner of 27th Avenue and 1st Street that covers almost the entire lot (see view 3 of **Figure 9-4**). The box-shaped building is primarily windowless, with a narrow strip of glass block windows on the north façade and sealed windows on the east (1st Street) façade. The 1st Street façade has four openings at ground level with roll-down metal gates. With the exception of the two-story northeast portion of the building and a corrugated metal rooftop addition on the north façade, the structure is one-story. To the south on 1st Street, the one-story brick portions of the building are



View from the foot of 26th Avenue of Whitey Ford Field, the Triborough (RFK) Bridge, and the Hell Gate Bridge **1**



Southeast view from the foot of 26th Avenue of the building located on the proposed Eastern Parcel **2**

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North view along 1st Street from Astoria Boulevard of the parking area and structure located on Block 490 of the WF Parcel **3**



View of the east façade of the building located on the southern portion of the WF Parcel **4**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photographs
Figure 9-4

windowless with two ground floor vehicular openings and one pedestrian opening, all with metal gates (see view 4 of **Figure 9-4**). A narrow brick chimney projects from the roof. The south façade abuts the paved parking area portion of the WF Parcel that extends between 1st Street and the East River. The paved parking area is currently used for construction vehicle and equipment parking and storage, and is surrounded by an approximately eight-foot high dilapidated chain link fence with a few small trees and bushes along the southern perimeter (see view 5 of **Figure 9-5**). There is a vehicular gate in the chain-link fence on 1st Street.

The buildings on Block 490 are separated from those on Block 916 to the north by an approximately 100-foot-wide paved area that extends from 1st Street to the East River. A metal picket fence borders 1st Street and contains a vehicular opening at the foot of 27th Avenue (see view 6 of **Figure 9-5**). A flagpole is located at the East River.

Lots 1 and 10 of Block 916 contain two buildings, each built to the lot line on 1st Street (see Figure 1-2 from Chapter 1, "Project Description"). The brick, box-shaped building at the northwest corner of 1st Street and 27th Avenue is approximately 25 feet high. The south façade has five small square windows evenly spaced below the roofline and an entrance at the ground level. The 1st Street has a few small windows at the northern end of the building and four large, square vehicular openings with roll-down gates at street level (see view 7 of **Figure 9-6**). The adjoining building to the north is a one-story concrete building with a square vehicular opening at street level at the north end of the building and small office entry at the south end. The north façade has a large vehicular opening that is accessed from an outdoor area formerly used for parking and storage that spans to 26th Avenue (see view 8 of **Figure 9-6**). Small furniture and outdoor equipment items and one shipping container are located in the yard, and a sliding chain-link fence gate provides access from 27th Avenue. The yard area extends out onto a small promontory into the East River with a rip rap shoreline. The foot of 26th Avenue consists of a paved roadway that terminates at the river with a low metal guardrail and concrete Jersey barrier. Beyond this are some small trees and other scrub-like vegetation that are located on the decline to the East River (see view 9 of **Figure 9-7**).

NYCHA Parcel

The NYCHA Parcel contains Lot 101 of Block 490, which includes the Astoria Houses Campus (see **Figure 9-1**), which consists of 22 X-shaped six- and seven-story brick-clad buildings totaling 1,116,500 gsf of development on a 27-acre parcel bounded by 27th Avenue, 1st Street, 8th Street, and the East River. The buildings are set back from the street by approximately 20 feet, but do not form a solid or continuous streetwall due to their X-shape. The buildings are connected via a series of driveways that lead to parking areas and paved pedestrian walkways. Open spaces containing basketball courts, playground equipment, and seating areas are located primarily along a north-south access extending from 3rd Street to the East River. A portion of Astoria Boulevard bisecting the parcel is currently demapped and closed to traffic, terminating in two cul-de-sacs within the campus. The large footprints of these buildings and their height, given the predominantly low-scale buildings located on the project site, make them particularly prominent from the pedestrian point of view (see view 3 of **Figure 9-4**).

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

As described above, the project site contains several undistinguished buildings, parking, and storage areas. As such, it does not contain any visual resources. The portions of the project site that are publicly accessible include the area at the foot of 26th Avenue between the Eastern and WF Parcels as well as Whitey Ford Field and the NYCHA Parcel. The East River, a prominent



View west from 1st Street of the paved parking area used for storage of construction vehicles and equipment on the southern portion of the WF Parcel **5**



View west of the metal fence and vehicular opening at the foot of 27th Avenue and 1st Street **6**

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Photographs



View of the south façade of the brick building at the northwest corner of 1st Street and 27th Avenue **7**



Southwest view from 26th Avenue and 1st Street of the outdoor storage area on the northern portion of the WF Parcel **8**

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Photographs



View west of where 26th Avenue terminates at the East River **9**



Northwest view from 26th Avenue of the southern tip of Mill Rock Park, the opposite Manhattan skyline, and the Wards Island pedestrian bridge **10**

visual resource in the area, is visible from all of these locations. Views west from 26th Avenue also include glimpses of the southern tip of Mill Rock Park, a small, not publicly accessible vegetated island in the East River, and the upper Manhattan skyline, including the Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) Drive and tall residential buildings that rise up behind it (see view 10 of **Figure 9-7**). Views of the Wards Island Bridge (103rd Street Footbridge), a pedestrian bridge connecting Manhattan and Wards Island and a State and National Registers (S/NR)-eligible resource, are also visible from this location. Views to the opposite Manhattan skyline are also available across the paved parking area on the southern portion of the WF Parcel from 1st Street, although they are partially obstructed by construction materials and equipment being stored in the parking area (see view 5 of **Figure 9-5**). Views of the Manhattan skyline, the northern tip of Roosevelt Island, and the Roosevelt Island Lighthouse (a New York City Landmark [NYCL]), are possible from the southern boundary of the NYCHA parcel (see view 11 of **Figure 9-8**). However, the angled placement of the buildings combined with the mature trees on the parcel limit northward views toward the Eastern and WF Parcels from areas south of Astoria Boulevard (see view 12 of **Figure 9-8**). Views of the Triborough (now RFK) Bridge and the Hell Gate Bridge, both of which are eligible for listing on the S/NR and visually prominent from the foot of 26th Avenue and 1st Street and Whitey Ford Field, are considered visual resources (see view 1 of **Figure 9-3**).

STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

The area around 27th Avenue and 9th Street is the highest point above sea level in the study area. From this point land gradually slopes down to the north, south, east, and west—towards the East River. The East River is the primary natural feature and forms the western boundary of the study area (see **Figures 9-1 and 9-2**). The river's edge is predominantly man-made, and within the study area is composed of bulkheads and rip rap. The discussion of the study area below is divided into three subareas based on major thoroughfares and land use patterns.

Subarea A – North of 27th Avenue, West of 9th Street

The street pattern in the portion of the study area north of 27th Avenue and west of 9th Street is primarily a rectilinear grid (with avenues running east-west and streets running north-south). Most streets carry one lane of traffic in each direction, with 27th Avenue serving as the main east-west corridor to areas farther east. All streets in this portion of the study area dead-end: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 9th Streets terminate to the north at 26th Avenue or the East River. Similarly, 27th Avenue terminates at 1st Street and 26th Avenue at the East River. First Street terminates at Astoria Boulevard. This portion of the study area contains three rectangular-shaped blocks between 26th and 27th Avenue and 1st and 4th Streets. The blocks north of 26th Avenue have the East River shorelines as their northern boundary and, therefore, contain irregularly shaped parcels.

Due to the numerous manufacturing, warehousing, and auto repair facilities in the area, the streetscape in this portion of the study area is primarily industrial in character and generally lacks a consistent street wall. In between low-rise brick and concrete manufacturing buildings lining the sidewalks are vacant lots, open storage and parking areas, and a few two- to three-story residential buildings (see view 13 of **Figure 9-9**). Vacant parcels are typically separated from the sidewalks by a variety of chain –link, plywood, and corrugated metal fencing and have an unmaintained appearance. These include lots along the east side of 2nd Street in the midblock, open air storage parcels on the midblock on the west side of 3rd Street a parking lot at



View southwest from southern portion of the NYCHA Parcel of the northern tip of Roosevelt Island and the opposite Manhattan skyline **11**



View north towards the proposed WF Parcel from the southern portion of the NYCHA Astoria Houses complex **12**

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Photographs



Southeast view of 3rd Street midblock between 26th and 27th Avenues showing the vacant buildings and industrial character of the area **13**



View of a vacant lot located at the southwest corner of 26th Avenue and 3rd Street **14**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photographs

the northeast corner of 27th Avenue and 3rd Street, and the large open air storage parcel at the southwest corner of 26th Avenue and 3rd Street (see view 14 of **Figure 9-9**). On the north side of 26th Avenue east of 3rd Street, there are small paved areas in front of some of the industrial buildings for truck parking, with trucks also parked on the sidewalk. Newer businesses and residential buildings are generally built to the sidewalk, forming a more coherent streetwall (see view 15 of **Figure 9-10**). The few older residences in the area, located primarily in the block bounded by 3rd and 4th Streets and 26th and 27th Avenues are typically set back from the street behind narrow paved areas and fences that border the street (see view 16 of **Figure 9-10**). Two clusters of three-story brick rowhouses forming a brief, consistent streetwall are located on 27th Avenue and 9th Street (see view 17 of **Figure 9-11**).

There are few street trees in this portion of the study area (see view 13 of **Figure 9-9**). Most of the trees are located within the midblock in areas used for storage between 27th and 26th Avenues and along the East River waterfront between 4th and 9th Streets. Street furniture is mostly limited to standard metal light poles, fire hydrants, bollards, and street signage. The general lack of street trees, combined with the primarily utilitarian, industrial-type buildings with few openings at the street level, does not create a visually interesting streetscape from the view of the pedestrian.

In general, the urban design in this portion of the study area consists of low-rise masonry industrial buildings with large footprints, high lot coverage, and few window openings on the street. A few pockets of low-rise residential buildings are located in the area, including the two clusters of rowhouses noted above, three newer three- and four-story brick residential buildings on 26th and 27th Avenues and 2nd Street, and a few two-story wood-frame houses with central gable roofs on 26th Avenue and 3rd Street. Two larger residential buildings are located on 27th Avenue, including the 15-story Goodwill Apartments/Jamaica Medical Center separated from the street by a lawn, hedge, and low, black iron-picket fence at the northeast corner of 4th Street (see view 18 of **Figure 9-11**). The brick tower, although visually prominent in the predominantly low-rise area west of 9th Street, is not visible east of 9th Street due to the downhill slope of 27th Avenue. A six-story, relatively unadorned brick building with a nearly half-block long footprint and paired double-hung sash windows is also located on 27th Avenue at the northwest corner of 9th Street (see view 19 of **Figure 9-12**). The building is set back from the sidewalk and surrounded by a narrow yard and chain link fence.

There are no publicly accessible open spaces or parks in this portion of the study area.

Subarea B – North of Astoria Boulevard/Main Avenue, East of 8th and 9th Streets, and Hallet's Cove Playground

The street pattern in this portion of the study area is a rectilinear grid north of 27th Avenue. Due to the diagonal direction of Astoria Boulevard/Main Avenue, the grid becomes irregular south of 27th Avenue (see **Figure 9-1**). Both 27th Avenue and Astoria Boulevard carry one lane of traffic in each direction and serve as the main east-west corridors in this portion of the study area. Main Avenue is a one-way street going east that connects Vernon and Astoria Boulevards. Eighth Street is a primary north-south street that also connects traffic to Vernon Boulevard and other areas further south. Several streets in this portion of the study area dead end to the north, including 9th Street, which terminates at the East River, and 14th Street and 14th Place, which terminate at Astoria Park just north of the study area. Twelfth Street turns into Shore Boulevard just south of Astoria Park South and continues north under the RFK Bridge. As previously noted, due to the diagonal direction of Astoria Boulevard/Main Avenue, the blocks in between



View of a row of recently constructed residential buildings on the far left located on the north side of 27th Avenue at 2nd Street **15**



View of some of the few residences in this portion of the study area on the south side of 26th Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets **16**



View of a cluster of three-story brick rowhouses located on the north side of 27th Avenue near 9th Street **17**



View of the south façade of the Goodwill Apartments/Jamaica Medical Center located on the northeast corner of 27th Avenue and 4th Street **18**

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View of the six-story residential building on the far right at the northwest corner of 9th Street and 27th Avenue **19**



View of streetscape, houses, and yards on the east side of 12th Street north of 27th Avenue **20**

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Photographs

these streets and 27th Avenue are irregularly shaped. The parcel located on the East River to the north is also irregularly shaped due to the curving shoreline.

This primarily residential portion of the study area north of 27th Avenue is characterized by streets lined with mature trees and landscaping, such as hedges, low masonry walls with flowers and bushes planted above, and ivy-covered fences (see view 20 of **Figure 9-12**). The tree-lined streets, landscaping, and fencing delineating the yards of residences set back from the street provide an inviting pedestrian experience. The streetscape changes south of 27th Avenue as the residential character on north-south streets is more defined by rows of attached houses that are set back from the sidewalk and form a continuous streetwall (see view 21 of **Figure 9-13**). Between the sidewalk and the residences are narrow landscaped yards delineated at the edges with fencing or hedges. As a result, there are fewer street trees on these streets than those north of 27th Avenue. However, large mature trees in this portion of the study area are generally located around the churches along 27th Avenue (see view 22 of **Figure 9-13**). In general, the north side of the portion of Astoria Boulevard between 12th to 18th Streets has a continuous streetwall, with low-rise mixed use buildings, wide sidewalks, and street trees; however, many of the ground-floor commercial spaces along the boulevard are vacant (see view 23 of **Figure 9-14**). There is no continuous streetwall and a general lack of street trees on Astoria Boulevard between 8th and 12th Streets, as low-rise mixed-use buildings located adjacent to the sidewalk are interspersed with surface parking areas and smaller buildings set back from the street (see view 24 of **Figure 9-14**).

In general, the buildings located in this portion of the study area are low-rise with low- to medium lot coverage. As noted above, the area north of 27th Avenue consists of two- to three-story single- and multi-family residences. Residential architectural styles in the area vary widely and include, Gothic Revival, Arts and Crafts, and Italiante (see view 20 of **Figure 9-12**). South of 27th Avenue residential buildings consist primarily of attached stone-clad rowhouses with decorative gables and dormer windows on the third floor (see view 21 of **Figure 9-13**). The churches on 27th Avenue are masonry buildings with larger footprints located on corner lots and separated from the street by fences or low walls (see view 22 of **Figure 9-13**). Two mid-rise and one high-rise building are located in this portion of the study area. Two eight-story, relatively unadorned brick buildings are located on opposite sides of 27th Avenue at 9th Street. These buildings are set back slightly from the street, separated by metal and chain link fences, and have large footprints. The 23-story Shore Tower Condominiums located between Shore Boulevard and the East River is the tallest building in the entire study area (see view 25 of **Figure 9-15**). Beginning at the 17th floor, the roofline of the crescent-shaped building gradually steps up one floor on each end towards the center of the building. The roofline combined with the uniform-sized balconies on the north and south elevations gives the building a distinctive, modern appearance.

Two open spaces are located in the study area. Hallet's Cove Playground contains paved recreational areas, play equipment, and an esplanade along the river. The open space is accessed by an asphalt paved walkway that extends from a paved ball area on 1st Street adjacent to the south side of the proposed WF Parcel. The esplanade follows the curve of the shoreline, and is lined with wood benches and metal streetlamps and bordered along the river by a rusted metal fence (see view 26 of **Figure 9-15**). The esplanade ends at a paved playground area and ballpark area at the corner of Vernon Boulevard, 8th Street, and Main Avenue. The Two Coves Community Garden, located at the corner of Astoria and Vernon Boulevards, is surrounded by an approximately eight-foot high black chain link fence (see view 27 of **Figure 9-16**).



View of rowhouses on the west side of 14th Street south of 27th Avenue **21**



View of mature trees and one of the churches on 27th Avenue at 14th Street **22**

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View of the streetscape on the north side of Astoria Boulevard between 12th and 14th Streets **23**



View of the streetscape and streetwall on the north side of Astoria Boulevard between 8th and 12th Streets **24**

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Figure 9-14



View north of the Shore Tower Condominiums from 12th Street **25**



View east of the Hallet's Cove Playground esplanade south of the NYCHA Astoria Houses complex **26**

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View of the Two Coves community garden from Astoria Boulevard **27**



View looking west of the residences and mature trees along the north side of 30th Road from 12th Street **28**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photographs
Figure 9-16

Subarea C – South of Astoria Boulevard/Main Avenue, West of 14th Street, and North of 31st Drive

The street pattern in this portion of the study area is irregular due to the diagonal direction of streets, including Astoria Boulevard/Main Avenue (see **Figure 9-1**). The primary north-south street is Vernon Boulevard, which follows the shoreline of the East River. With the exception of 30th Avenue which connects to 8th Street, all the east-west streets in this portion of the study area dead end at Vernon Boulevard. Due to the diagonal direction of streets and their termination at Vernon Boulevard, block shapes in this portion of the study area are generally irregular.

Street trees tend to be located along 30th Road, which is predominantly residential, and the adjacent north-south streets (see view 28 of **Figure 9-16**). In contrast, 30th Avenue, 30th Drive, and 31st Avenue tend to be devoid of street trees, as trees are more concentrated in the midblock areas bounded by these streets (see view 29 of **Figure 9-17**). The streets concentrated around 30th Road have a somewhat irregular streetwall, as the apartment buildings and houses are often separated from the street by narrow, fenced yards. Similarly, 30th and 31st Avenues and Vernon Boulevard do not have consistent streetwalls due to their mix of residential, commercial buildings, and manufacturing buildings interspersed with vacant lots.

This portion of the study area contains predominantly low-rise buildings. With the exception of three buildings located in the southern most portion of the area, no buildings exceed four stories in height. The residential buildings concentrated along 30th Road and the adjacent north-south streets are predominantly two- to three-story masonry or wood frame residences with porches, stoops, and occasional projecting bay windows on the second floor (see view 30 of **Figure 9-17**). A handful of larger four-story apartment buildings are also located in this area. The buildings along Vernon Boulevard are predominantly one- to two-story manufacturing or commercial masonry buildings, with the exception of the newer six-story residential building located on the north side of Vernon Boulevard and 31st Avenue (see view 31 of **Figure 9-18**). On the south side of this corner is a six-story former piano factory building. This brick building with a mansard roof on its corner tower has been recently converted to residential and commercial uses (see view 32 of **Figure 9-18**). Immediately east of the former piano factory is a 20-story gray brick residential and commercial building with balconies and a stepped, diagonal roofline.

One open space is located in this portion of the study area. Socrates Sculpture Park, located between 31st Drive and Broadway is a waterfront park located in the southern most portion of the study area. The park contains sculptures and installations that change regularly, and a walking path along the water (see view 33 of **Figure 9-19**).

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

The visual resources in the study area consist of sweeping views of the East River, its smaller islands, and the Queens and Manhattan waterfronts and skylines. Within these views there are also individual historic resources that function as visual resources. The waterfront esplanade that extends south along Hallet's Cove Playground affords panoramic views to the northeast, east, and south. Views north from the playground and the waterfront esplanade are generally obstructed by the Astoria Houses Campus and tall trees on the site. To the northeast, views include Mill Rock Park and Wards Island Bridge. The Manhattan skyline is visible beyond Mill Rock Park. Views east from the Hallet's Cove Playground waterfront esplanade of the Manhattan waterfront include several individual visual resources (see view 34 of **Figure 9-19**). These include the lawns, trees, and stone retaining walls of Carl Schurz Park at approximately



View looking east of the buildings and streetscape along the north side of 30th Avenue between 12th and 14th Streets **29**



View east of the residences along the south side of 30th Drive between 12th and 14th Streets **30**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photographs



View of the new residential building on the northeast corner of Vernon Boulevard and 31st Avenue **31**



View of the building recently converted into residential and commercial space on the southwest corner of 31st Avenue and Vernon Boulevard and, behind it, the new 20-story residential and commercial building **32**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photographs



View west of Socrates Sculpture Park and the opposite Manhattan skyline **33**



View southwest from the Hallet's Cove Playground esplanade showing the northern tip of Roosevelt Island, Lighthouse Park, and the top of the Chrysler Building **34**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photographs
Figure 9-19

86th Street; the ferry dock just north of the park; the pale yellow clapboards and white columns of Gracie Mansion, which are visible behind the trees at approximately 88th Street during the winter months; the parabolic arched Municipal Asphalt Building; and the tips of the Chrysler and Empire State Buildings. The FDR Drive is visible south of 81st Street where it runs at grade; north of this street the highway runs underneath the Carl Schurz Park esplanade.

Views to the south include Lighthouse Park at the northern tip of Roosevelt Island, including the late 19th century, octagonal shaped lighthouse, and trees and lawns (see view 12 of **Figure 9-8**). Beyond this, the Island's various taller buildings housing medical and residential uses are also visible. Also visible in views south is the tall smokestack of the East 75th Street Power House in Manhattan, the span and decorative trusswork of the Queensboro (59th Street) Bridge (a NYCL), and the four tall red and white smokestacks of the "Big Allis" Power Plant in Long Island City. The tall glass tower that is the Citigroup Building, also in Long Island City, is visually prominent but is not considered to be a visual resource (see view 35 of **Figure 9-20**).

From the foot of 2nd Street where it terminates at the East River, there are expansive views of Wards Island, including landscaped areas and trees at the south end of the island in Wards Island Park, and the large Art Moderne-style Manhattan Psychiatric Center (see view 36 of **Figure 9-20**). Also visible are the RFK Bridge and the Hell Gate Bridge, historic resources that are also visual resources.

Views from Socrates Sculpture Park include the Manhattan waterfront and skyline, Roosevelt Island, and the East River (see view 33 of **Figure 9-19**). At the foot of 27th Avenue, limited views to the East River and Manhattan shoreline are provided across the paved area that separates the buildings on Blocks 490 and 916 (see view 6 of **Figure 9-5**). Longer views to the East River and Manhattan shoreline are possible along 27th Avenue all the way east to 9th Street due to the rise in topography along this view corridor (see view 37 of **Figure 9-21**).

Views to Project Site from Outside the Study Area

Views to the project site are available from outside the study area, in Manhattan, from the waterfront area of Carl Schurz Park and the portion of the East River Esplanade that extends northward from East 90th Street along the shoreline at grade with the FDR Drive. The project site is part of the panoramic views north and south on the East River afforded from these locations (see view 38 of **Figure 9-21**). The buildings primarily present blank, windowless facades in these views, though the buildings on Block 490 have large red letters mounted on the west façade that read "Allied Building Products Corp." Visible behind the site are buildings that rise above the Astoria Houses, including the Shore Towers Condominiums and Goodwill Terrace Apartments/Jamaica Medical Center. Other visual resources included in these views are the RFK and Hell Gate Bridges to the north, and Lighthouse Park on Roosevelt Island to the south.

Views of the southern portion of the project site, including the parking lot and mostly blank south wall of the southernmost building, are also available looking north from Lighthouse Park on Roosevelt Island (see view 39 of **Figure 9-22**). These views also include the seven-story Astoria Houses, 15-story Goodwill Terrace Apartments/Jamaica Medical Center, and the 23-story Shore Towers Condominiums in the Subarea B portion of the study area.

The parks at the south end of Wards Island provide views of the project site, including Whitey Ford Field and the industrial buildings and vegetation along the East River. As with the views from Carl Schurz Park, the buildings primarily present blank, windowless facades in these views (see view 40 of **Figure 9-22**).



View southeast from Hallet's Cove Playground of the Queensboro Bridge and the smokestacks of the "Big Allis" Power Plant and Citigroup Building in Long Island City **35**



View north from the foot of 2nd Street at the East River of Wards Island and the Manhattan Psychiatric Center **36**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photographs



View west of the East River and Manhattan skyline from 9th Street and 27th Avenue **37**



View east from Carl Schurz Park of the project site and western portion of the Halletts Point peninsula **38**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photographs



View northeast from Lighthouse Park on Roosevelt Island of the Astoria Houses complex and the RFK Bridge **39**



View south from the esplanade along the southern portion of Wards Island of the project site **40**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Photographs

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

PROJECT SITE

In the future without the proposed project, it is assumed that the existing conditions on the project site would be maintained. The project site would continue to be occupied by light industrial uses and open storage and parking areas, with no public access to the waterfront with the exception of the dead-end of 26th Avenue at the East River. The Astoria Houses Campus and Whitey Ford Field would also be maintained.

STUDY AREA

In the future without the proposed project, several No Build projects are anticipated to be completed in the study area by 2022. The most notable is Astoria Cove, which, if approved, will be partially complete by 2022, transforming five lots located on both sides of 26th Avenue between 4th and 9th Streets, currently occupied by industrial uses, into a mixed-use waterfront development. Two mapped but unbuilt segments of 8th Street are expected to be constructed as part of the project, and local retail would be located along all vehicular streets within the Astoria Cove project site. This project would alter urban design conditions in the study area by opening up new streets with retail uses and continuing the trend of new residential development in the area. The project would also obstruct views of the RFK Bridge's south tower from Lighthouse Park on Roosevelt Island.

Other smaller projects in the study area anticipated to be complete by 2022 include new residential developments on 2nd Street between 26th and 27th Avenues, on 12th Street between 26th and 27th Avenues, at the northwest corner of Astoria Boulevard and Blackwell Lane, and on 12th Street between Welling Court and 30th Road. These projects are anticipated to be consistent with existing residential buildings in the study area.

E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

The proposed project would demolish all structures on the Eastern and WF Parcels and replace the buildings, storage, and parking uses on these parcels with a mixed-use development consisting of Buildings 1 through 5 and publicly accessible waterfront open space (see **Figure 9-23**). **Figure 9-24** shows a rendering of the proposed project. On the NYCHA Parcel, Buildings 6, 7, and 8 would be developed in areas currently occupied by trash facilities and parking. In total, the proposed project would result in the development of approximately 2.73 million gross square feet of residential, retail, and parking uses as well as 2.35 acres of publicly accessible open space.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the proposed project would require the rezoning of the Eastern and WF Parcels from M1-1 to R7-3/C1-4, rezoning of a portion of the NYCHA Parcel from R6 to R6/C1-4, the establishment of an LSGD, and map amendments to construct a new connecting street segment between existing mapped portions of Astoria Boulevard and demap portions of 26th and 27th Avenues. These approvals would facilitate the development of the project site into a mixed-use area with publicly accessible waterfront open space and an esplanade and neighborhood retail uses.



NOTE: See Figure 1-14 for the Proposed Zoning Map Changes

SITE PLAN SOURCE: Studio V Architects

Proposed Project
Figure 9-23



SOURCE: Studio V Architects and James Corner Field Operations

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative Rendering of Proposed Project in Context

Eastern Parcel

The Eastern Parcel would be developed with a mixed-use, approximately 503,863 gsf building with two trapezoidal towers (Buildings 1A and 1B). The building's base would be approximately 43 feet in height, the southern tower would be 17 stories tall, and the northern tower would be 22 stories (approximately 220 feet) tall. The building would have a rectangular footprint built close to the lot line on all sides except 1st Street, which would be trapezoidal. The bases would contain parking uses in a core around which would be residential and retail uses. The residential uses wrapping the parking garages would consist of townhouses below apartment units, and approximately 30,000 gsf of retail designed for supermarket use would be located on the ground floor. New publicly accessible open space would be provided adjacent to Building 1 between 1st Street and 2nd Street. **Figure 9-25** shows an illustrative view of 1st Street looking north with Buildings 1 and 2 visible.

WF Parcel

The WF Parcel would be developed with six buildings designed with low- to mid-rise bases ranging from approximately 40 to 80 feet in height (Buildings 2, 3, 4, 5A, and 5B). The trapezoidal towers above the bases would range from 210 to 310 feet (21 to 31 stories) in height. Buildings 5A and 5B would share a base. All of the buildings would have trapezoidal footprints and would contain parking uses in a core around which would be residential and retail uses. Ground floor retail would line portions of 1st Street and the demapped portion of 27th Avenue, leading to the waterfront. A publicly accessible waterfront esplanade would run the length of the WF Parcel, connecting Hallet's Cove Playground to the south and Whitey Ford Field to the north. The waterfront esplanade would include landscaping, play and rest areas, and seating (see **Figure 9-26**). The portion of 26th Avenue west of 1st Street also would be demapped and transformed into a pedestrian waterfront access corridor. Buildings 2 and 3, and 4 and 5B also would be separated by publicly-accessible pedestrian walkways leading to the new waterfront esplanade. These connections have been designed to connect to existing pedestrian paths, such as the Astoria Houses walkways on the NYCHA Parcel east of 1st Street. A total of approximately 2.2 acres of publicly accessible open space would be created on the WF Parcel.

NYCHA Parcel

Five buildings would be developed on the NYCHA Parcel (Buildings 6A, 6B, 7A, 7B, and 8). Four of these would consist of two sets of adjoining 130- to 140-foot tall (13- to 14-story) buildings with a base height of approximately 60 feet located on 27th Avenue at 2nd and 4th Streets. Buildings 7A, 7B, and 6B would have a rectangular footprint and shape, while Building 6A would be a modified L-shape. These buildings would contain residential and retail uses along 27th Avenue and surface parking to the south. The existing uses on these sites, including parking and trash facilities, would be relocated elsewhere within the Astoria Houses Campus. **Figure 9-27** shows an illustrative view of these buildings on 27th Avenue looking west.

Building 8, an approximately 270-foot tall (27-story) building, would also be constructed on the NYCHA Parcel, at the corner of Astoria Boulevard and 1st Street. The modified L-shaped building would contain residential units, retail uses on Astoria Boulevard at the intersection of 1st Street, and garage parking in the base of the building. As discussed in Chapter 1, "Project Description," Building 8 is expected to be developed as part of a future request for proposals (RFP) by NYCHA.

4.18.13



SOURCE: Studio V Architects and James Corner Field Operations

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative View of 1st Street (Looking North)

HALLETTS POINT

Figure 9-25



NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative Rendering of Proposed Esplanade



SOURCE: Studio V Architects and James Corner Field Operations

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative View of 27th Avenue (Looking West)

In addition, a new connecting street segment would be constructed between existing mapped portions of Astoria Boulevard on the NYCHA Parcel, which currently terminates as a cul-de-sac at the southern terminus of 1st Street.

As shown in **Figures 9-28** through **9-31**, the proposed project would significantly change the urban design character of the project site. At 210 to 310 feet tall and ranging from approximately 255,000 to 504,000 gsf in size, the height and bulk of the six proposed buildings on the Eastern and WF Parcels would be substantially taller than the existing one- and two-story buildings on the site. The proposed approximately 270-foot (27-story) tall, 299,000 gsf Building 8 on the NYCHA Parcel also would be substantially taller than the existing seven-story buildings on that parcel. The other four 130- to 140-foot (13- to 14-story) buildings ranging from 53,000 to 89,000 gsf proposed on the NYCHA Parcel (Buildings 6A, 6B, 7A, and 7B) would be only slightly taller than the existing seven-story buildings, and, therefore would not constitute a substantial change in the urban design character in this portion of the project site. However, the increased scale, both in terms of bulk and height, of Buildings 1 through 5 and 8 would be a notable change from the pedestrian's perspective to the appearance and character of the project site compared to the No Build condition.

Compared to the future without the proposed project, in the future with the proposed project the visual appearance and thus the pedestrian experience of the project site would change considerably; however, this change would not meet the *CEQR Technical Manual* threshold for a significant adverse urban design impact in that it would not alter the arrangement, appearance, or functionality of the project site such that the alteration would negatively affect a pedestrian's experience of the area. Rather, instead of a largely vacant and underutilized stretch of industrial and manufacturing buildings along 1st Street and the west end of 26th Avenue, the pedestrian experience of the area would include new buildings with active ground-floor uses, including retail. The proposed buildings on the NYCHA Parcel would also enliven the street with active ground-floor and retail uses. The new waterfront esplanade and new publicly-accessible open spaces along the demapped portions of 26th and 27th Avenues and in between the proposed buildings on the WF Parcel along 1st Street would provide recreational areas and would visually enhance the experience of walking around the project site. These pedestrian areas and pathways would also improve access to the waterfront and circulation on the project site, and the proposed waterfront esplanade would also provide a cohesive transition and connection between the project site and surrounding open space resources. The greater levels of pedestrian activity generated by the proposed uses on the building sites would be self-reinforcing, making the project area more inviting and appealing to visit.

Overall, the proposed project would enhance the pedestrian's experience of the project site and improve the urban design of the project site by replacing vacant buildings and vacant land with new active, mixed-use development.

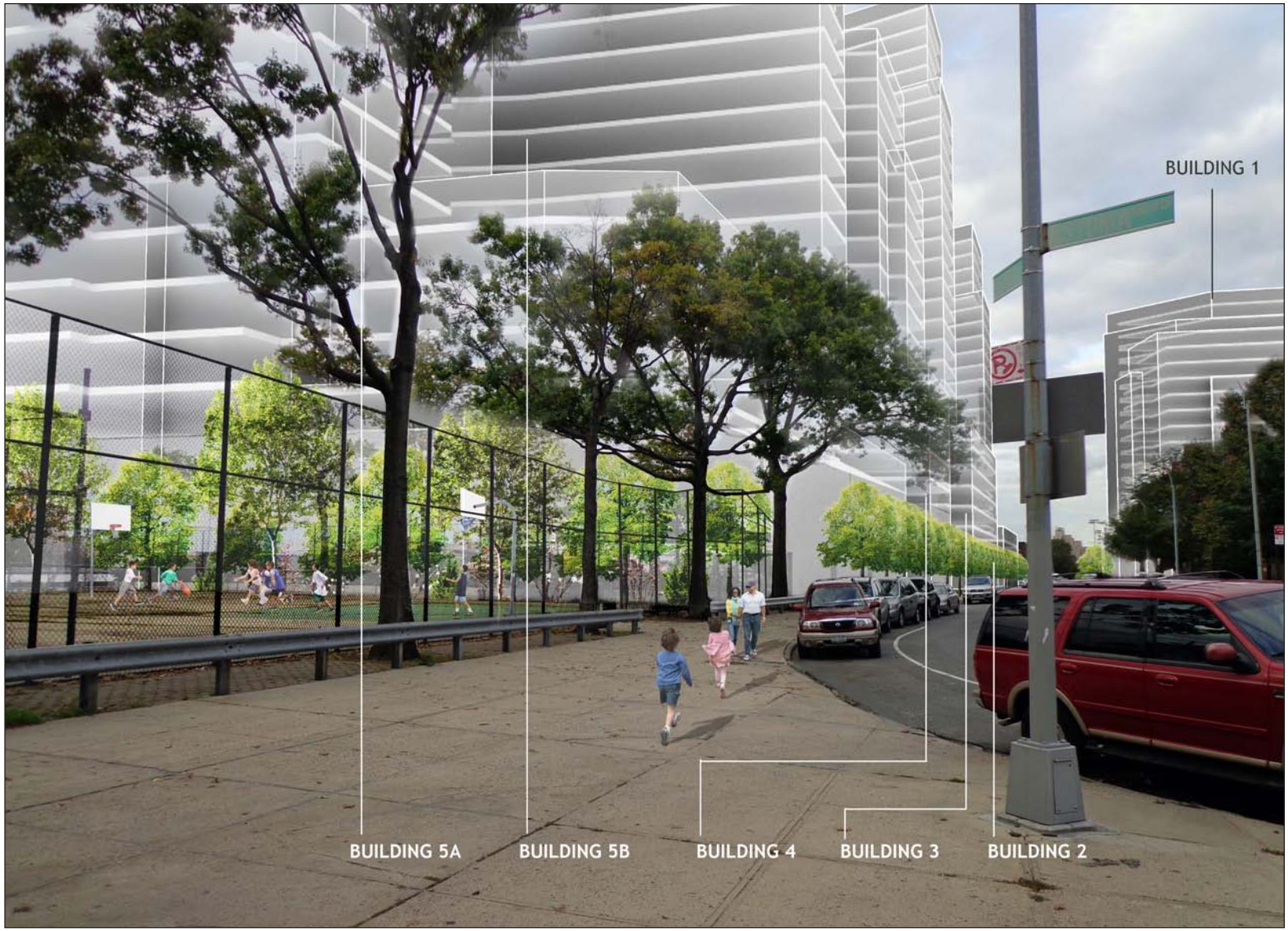
Wind

Large buildings have the potential to intercept the flow of wind at high elevations along the building façade and redirect wind down to ground level. Such a "downwashing flow" can cause accelerated wind speeds at the pedestrian level, which typically occur at the corners of tall buildings where the downwashed wind passes around the edges of the building. When two or more buildings are situated side by side, winds tend to accelerate through the gap between the buildings, known as a "channeling effect." If these conditions occur for prevailing winds, and especially for strong winds, there is an increased potential for the creation of accelerated winds at ground level.



Illustrative View of No Build —
View north from 1st Street and Astoria Boulevard

Figure 9-28



NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative View of Build Condition —
View north from 1st Street and Astoria Boulevard



Illustrative View of No Build —
View south from Whitey Ford Field

Figure 9-30



NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative View of Build Condition —
View south from Whitey Ford Field

The *CEQR Technical Manual* recommends an analysis of pedestrian wind conditions for projects that would result in the construction of multiple large buildings at locations that experience high wind conditions, such as along the waterfront, which may result in an exacerbation of wind conditions that may affect pedestrian safety. Since the proposed project, which is located along the East River, would result in the construction of multiple large buildings close to one another on the project site, there is the potential for downwash and channeling effects, and consequent elevated pedestrian-level wind conditions. Therefore, an analysis of pedestrian wind conditions was conducted.

The pedestrian wind analysis was undertaken by the firm Cermak Peterka & Petersen (CPP) to better understand wind conditions at the project site and assess whether the proposed project might result in accelerated ground-level winds. This testing was conducted using a scale model of the proposed buildings, proposed landscape elements and existing surrounding buildings in a wind tunnel. Landscaping features were incorporated into the open space design for the proposed project to minimize the potential for elevated pedestrian wind conditions.

In completing the assessment of potential wind effects, wind conditions at and around the project site for the future with and without the proposed project were compared against a wind speed criterion used by CPP, which has conducted research and observations of wind patterns at developments throughout North America over the past 30 years. The assessment used a wind criterion based on a mean wind speed of 33.6 miles per hour (mph) occurring once or more per season, which is equivalent to a gust of 62 miles per hour, since wind gusts at that level have been shown to have the potential to affect a pedestrian's balance and footing. If the analysis identifies locations exceeding this criterion, wind reduction measures should be considered if winds of this magnitude could occur more than once per season at locations where pedestrians would be expected to be present.

Existing wind conditions at and around the project site were evaluated based on wind conditions monitored at the United States National Weather Service meteorological station at LaGuardia Airport for the period 1945 through 2004. Wind conditions were analyzed for the June through August "summer" period and December through February "winter" period. A review of these data indicated that the highest winds occurring during the summer period were predominately from the Northwest, while the highest winds during the winter period were predominately from the East through East Northeast, with mean wind speeds exceeding 25 mph approximately 0.75 percent of the time during the summer period and approximately 8.3 percent of the time during the winter period. The prevailing winds and wind conditions at the project site are similar to those at comparable locations near the East River, since there are no major intervening terrain features that would change the flow of winds from the dominant wind directions affecting the project site.

The wind tunnel model included all relevant surrounding buildings and topography within a 1,360 foot radius of the project site. Measurement locations were placed both on and off-site and in areas where pedestrian activity would be expected. In addition, the model included landscaping and other significant structures on-site as well as nearby off-site landscaping.

The results of the wind tunnel analysis indicate that during the summer months (June through August) there is no potential for pedestrian wind conditions which exceed CPP's safety criterion at any of the locations tested. During the winter months (December through February), the analysis indicates that there are up to 11 locations (out of a total of 70) where pedestrian-level winds potentially exceed the safety criterion. At nine locations on the WF Parcel, the results indicate that wind gust conditions above 62 mph in the winter season would occur at a frequency

ranging from 1 to 5 times in the winter season, and at the two off-site locations (adjacent to the Eastern Parcel) these wind conditions would occur approximately 2 times in the winter season. These include locations between Buildings 2 and 3 and between Buildings 3 and 4 when the winds are blowing from the east northeast; and locations between Buildings 3 and 4, between Buildings 4 and 5A, and to the south of Building 5A, when winds are blowing from the northwest and west northwest. No locations were identified at which the safety criterion would be exceeded when winds are blowing from the South, the dominant summer season wind direction. In addition, no locations on the NYCHA Parcel were found to exceed the safety criterion during either the summer or winter season.

These conditions would be similar to conditions at comparable locations along the waterfront in Queens and elsewhere near the East River. Overall, no significant adverse urban design impacts would result from potential pedestrian wind conditions.

The assessment of pedestrian-level wind effects was completed based on the current conceptual level of design of the proposed development at the project site. Actual effects would vary depending on the final design of the project that would be developed under the proposed actions. Potential measures that could be employed that have been shown to reduce or minimize the effects of winds at ground level include the following:

- The creation of a podium, a series of terraces or setbacks at one of more of the proposed buildings to intercept winds that are downwashed along the faces of the proposed structures before they reach ground level.
- Incorporation of a chamfer or notched features along the corner of one of more of the buildings to reduce the potential for channeling of winds between buildings.
- Incorporation of one or more colonnades into the design of one or more of the buildings to deflect the flow of wind.
- Development of one or more protective canopies along walkways.
- Incorporation of one or more trellises between buildings to intercept winds that are downwashed along the faces of the proposed structures before they reach ground level.
- Incorporation of hard and soft landscaping, including wind screens and coniferous landscaping to help shelter pedestrians using sidewalks and other locations available to pedestrians near the bases of the buildings.

A number of the above measures have been incorporated into the proposed project (requirements for podiums and setbacks and minimum requirements for landscaping) and similar additional measures could be incorporated into the final design of the project within the constraints of the zoning approvals that would reduce or eliminate the potential for the creation of pedestrian-level wind conditions that exceed the safety criterion. The extent to which additional measures would be available to be incorporated into the final design of the buildings on the WF and Eastern Parcels would have to be balanced against urban design considerations of the project, including the goals of maximizing views of the East River.

Of the measures listed above, exceeding the safety criterion at most locations can potentially be minimized or avoided through the incorporation of additional landscape features in the project's open space plan. This would include additional evergreen, semi-evergreen or marcescent (deciduous trees that retain their leaves in the winter) tree plantings, or replacement of existing/proposed deciduous tree plantings with these plantings, to deflect and disperse wind gusts. To further address potential pedestrian wind conditions, similar additional measures could

be incorporated into the final design of the project within the constraints of the zoning approvals that would reduce or eliminate the potential for the creation of pedestrian-level wind conditions that exceed the safety criterion.

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

As noted above, there are no visual resources located on the project site. As the location of the proposed buildings is consistent with the existing street grid, most views toward the East River and Manhattan skyline would still be available from the project site in the future with the proposed project. Specifically, views of the East River, Manhattan skyline, and Mill Rock Park would still be available from the foot of 26th and 27th Avenues and Astoria Boulevard. Views to the East River and Manhattan skyline available across the southern paved portion of the WF Parcel from 1st Street would be obstructed by proposed Building 5A; however, these views would be partially obstructed by the construction materials and equipment located in the parking area in the future without the proposed project. Additionally, the proposed pedestrian paths between Buildings 4 and 5B, and between 5A and Hallet's Cove Playground, would provide access to the new waterfront esplanade, thereby providing new, unobstructed views of the East River and Manhattan skyline from these locations. Views of the East River, the Manhattan skyline, and the northern tip of Roosevelt Island would remain available from the southern boundary of the NYCHA Parcel, as would views of the RFK Bridge and the Hell Gate Bridge from Whitey Ford Field.

STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

The development associated with the proposed project would not result in any changes to the street pattern, block shapes, buildings, or streetscape in this portion of the study area. Compared to the future without the proposed project, however, the visual appearance of the project site—and thus the pedestrian's experience of the study area—would change considerably. The western portion of Halletts Point would be filled with new, active development (see **Figures 9-28, 9-29, 9-32, and 9-33**). The anticipated trapezoidal floorplates of the proposed buildings would generally differ from the rectangular floorplates in the study area. However, the proposed uses for the buildings would be complementary to those in the surrounding area. The height of the proposed buildings would also correspond to the height of the buildings on the opposite Manhattan skyline. Therefore, although the proposed project would add tall buildings in the study area, the new buildings would be compatible with the skyline in the No Build condition as viewed from this pedestrian perspective.

While the visual appearance of the project site from this portion of the study area would change considerably, again, this change would not meet the *CEQR Technical Manual* threshold for a significant adverse urban design impact in that it would not alter the arrangement, appearance, or functionality of the study area such that the alteration would negatively affect a pedestrian's experience of the area. Additionally, the new buildings with ground-floor uses, including retail and landscaping along 1st Street, 27th Avenue, and Astoria Boulevard would visually enhance the pedestrian experience in this portion of the study area. The pedestrian paths in between the proposed buildings would also provide access to the proposed waterfront esplanade, and the esplanade would provide a cohesive transition and connection between the project site and surrounding open space resources.



Illustrative View of No Build —
View west from 27th Avenue and 9th Street

Figure 9-32



NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative View of Build Condition —
View west from 27th Avenue and 9th Street

VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS

While the visual appearance of the project site would change considerably in the future with the proposed project, this change would only be perceptible from the pedestrian's perspective in the Halletts Point portion of the study area north of 27th Avenue and west of 9th Street, Socrates Sculpture Park, and the portion of Hallet's Cove Playground southwest of the NYCHA Parcel. As described above, the topography of the study area, which slopes down in all directions from the area at 9th Street and 27th Avenue, combined with the existing buildings, trees, and landscape, generally limits or completely prohibits views of the project site from streets east of 9th Street and south of 27th Avenue. Therefore, it is expected that the proposed project would either not be visible or would be only minimally visible from these portions of the study area. Views from areas within Halletts Point where the proposed project is anticipated to be visible, as noted above, are considered below.

Pedestrian-level views from within the study area from where the proposed project would be visible would change substantially compared to the future without the proposed project. In the future with the proposed project, these views would include a dense development consisting of buildings significantly taller than the surrounding urban fabric. However, prominent views from within the study area of visual resources including the East River, the Manhattan skyline, Roosevelt Island, Wards Island, the Wards Island Bridge, and the RFK and Hell Gate Bridges would not be obstructed. The proposed project would obstruct views of the RFK Bridge's suspension cables from Lighthouse Park on Roosevelt Island. However, this view is not a prominent view of the Bridge and does not constitute an important view corridor in the study area (see **Figures 9-34 and 9-35**).

Views of visual resources from the western foot of 26th Avenue to the RFK Bridge, Wards Island, Wards Island Bridge, and Hell Gate Bridge also would not be obstructed as a result of the proposed project. Although the No Build condition views to the East River and Manhattan skyline from 26th Avenue would be somewhat limited by the proposed tall buildings on the WF Parcel, a new pedestrian path leading to the proposed waterfront esplanade would provide new panoramic views of these visual resources. These views are anticipated to be an improvement over the views in the No Build condition, which would include vacant land and industrial buildings.

The proposed project would be prominent in views from 27th Avenue and 9th Street. However, given the orientation of the trapezoidal towers and the location of the proposed buildings, the proposed project would not obstruct long views to the East River and Manhattan skyline from this location (see **Figures 9-32 and 9-33**).

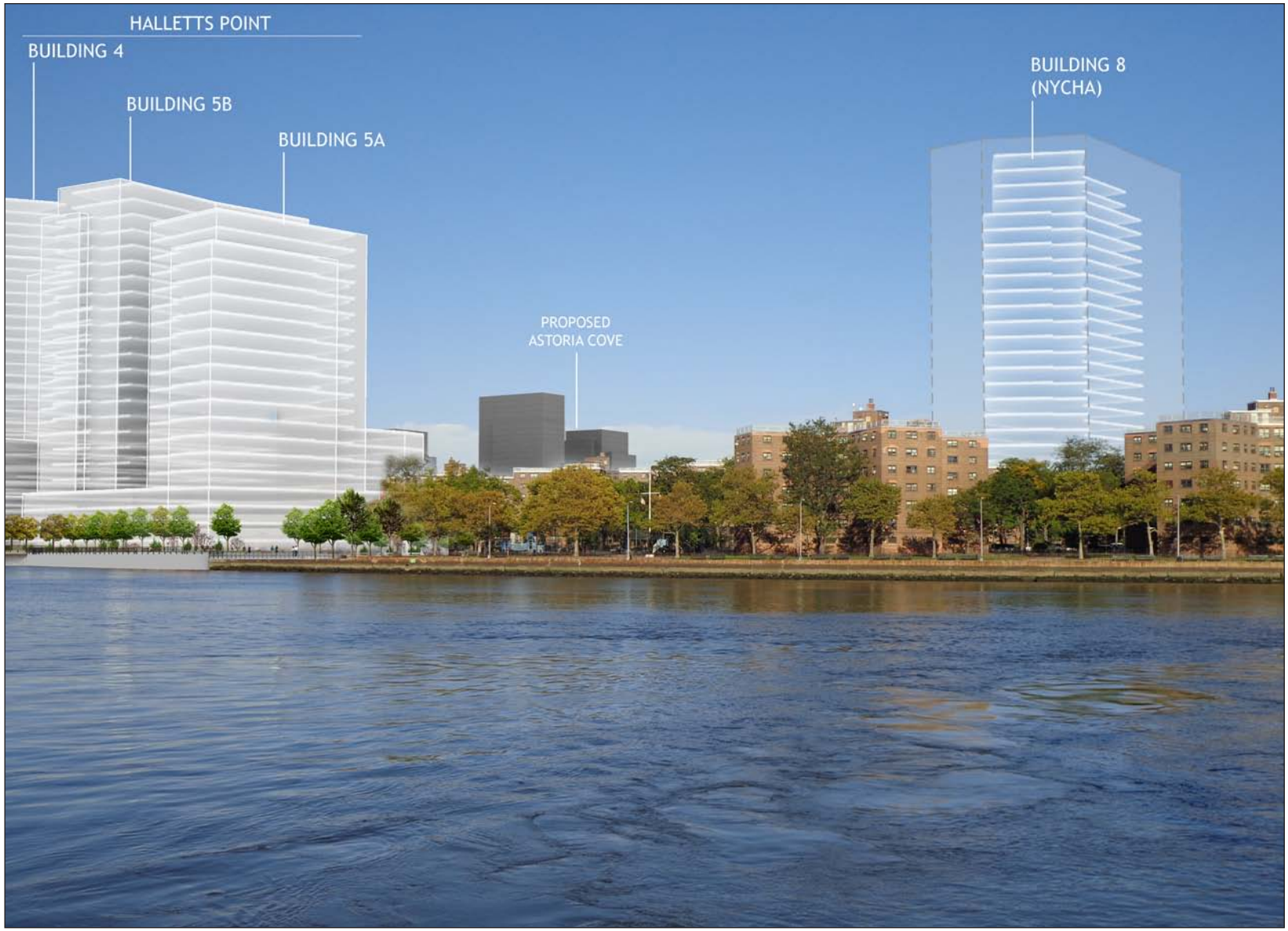
As noted above, views north of the proposed project from Hallet's Cove Playground would be mostly obstructed by the Astoria Houses Campus and tall trees on the site. Although views of the proposed buildings on the WF Parcel would be slightly visible from the playground, the buildings would not obstruct any views of visual resources. The most prominent views from Hallet's Cove Playground of the East River, Manhattan waterfront and skyline, and Roosevelt Island would remain. Therefore, the proposed project would not have any adverse visual impact on park users.

Pedestrian-level views of Halletts Point from Socrates Sculpture Park would change considerably in the future with the proposed project as a result of the construction of tall buildings located directly on the waterfront (see **Figures 9-36 and 9-37**). However, these changes are not anticipated to be significantly adverse as no view of important visual resources



Illustrative View of No Build —
View northeast from Roosevelt Island

Figure 9-34



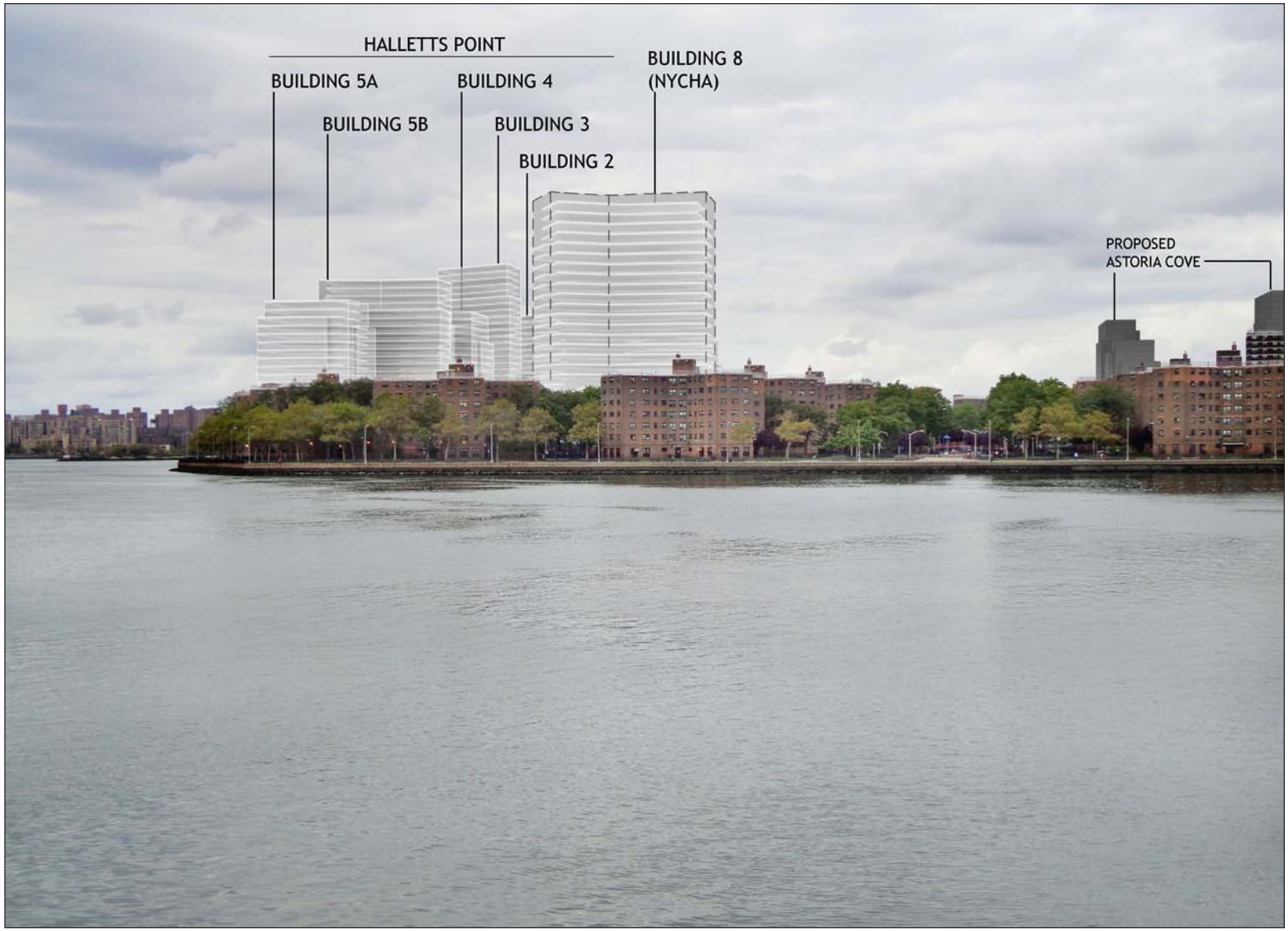
NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative View of Build Condition — View northeast from Roosevelt Island



Illustrative View of No Build —
View north from Socrates Sculpture Park

Figure 9-36



NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative View of Build Condition —
View north from Socrates Sculpture Park

would be obstructed. Prominent views from Socrates Sculpture Park of the Manhattan skyline and waterfront and the northern portion of Roosevelt Island also would remain.

Views to Project Site from Outside the Study Area

As with other views of the project site outside the study area, pedestrian-level views from Carl Schurz Park and the East River Esplanade north of 90th Street in Manhattan, Wards Island Park, and the Wards Island Bridge would change substantially as the proposed buildings along the waterfront would be significantly taller than the low- to mid-rise buildings in the No Build condition (see **Figures 9-38 and 9-39**). However, these changes are not anticipated to be significantly adverse as no view of important visual resources would be obstructed. Panoramic views of the East River, the Lighthouse Park on Roosevelt Island, the Queens waterfront, Mill Rock Park, the Wards Island Footbridge, and Wards Island would still be visible from Carl Schurz Park and the East River Esplanade**.** Views of the Citicorp Building from Wards Island would also be obstructed by the proposed project (see **Figures 9-40 and 9-41**). However, the Citigroup Building, although a tall building visible from several vantage points in Queens, Manhattan, and the East River and its islands, does not meet the criteria for listing on the S/NR, and is not considered a visual resource. Additionally, prominent views of visual resources, such as the East River, Mill Rock Park, the Manhattan skyline and waterfront, and the RFK and Hell Gate Bridges would remain. Therefore, the proposed project would not have significant adverse impacts on visual resources or view corridors from Wards Island and the Wards Island Bridge.

Overall, while the proposed project would result in substantial changes to the urban design of the project site, it would not have any significant adverse impacts related to urban design and visual resources. ✷



Illustrative View of No Build —
View west from Carl Schurz Park

Figure 9-38



NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative View of Build Condition — View west from Carl Schurz Park



Illustrative View of No Build —
View south from Wards Island

Figure 9-40



NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Illustrative View of Build Condition — View south from Wards Island