Chapter 8: Urban Design and Visual Resources

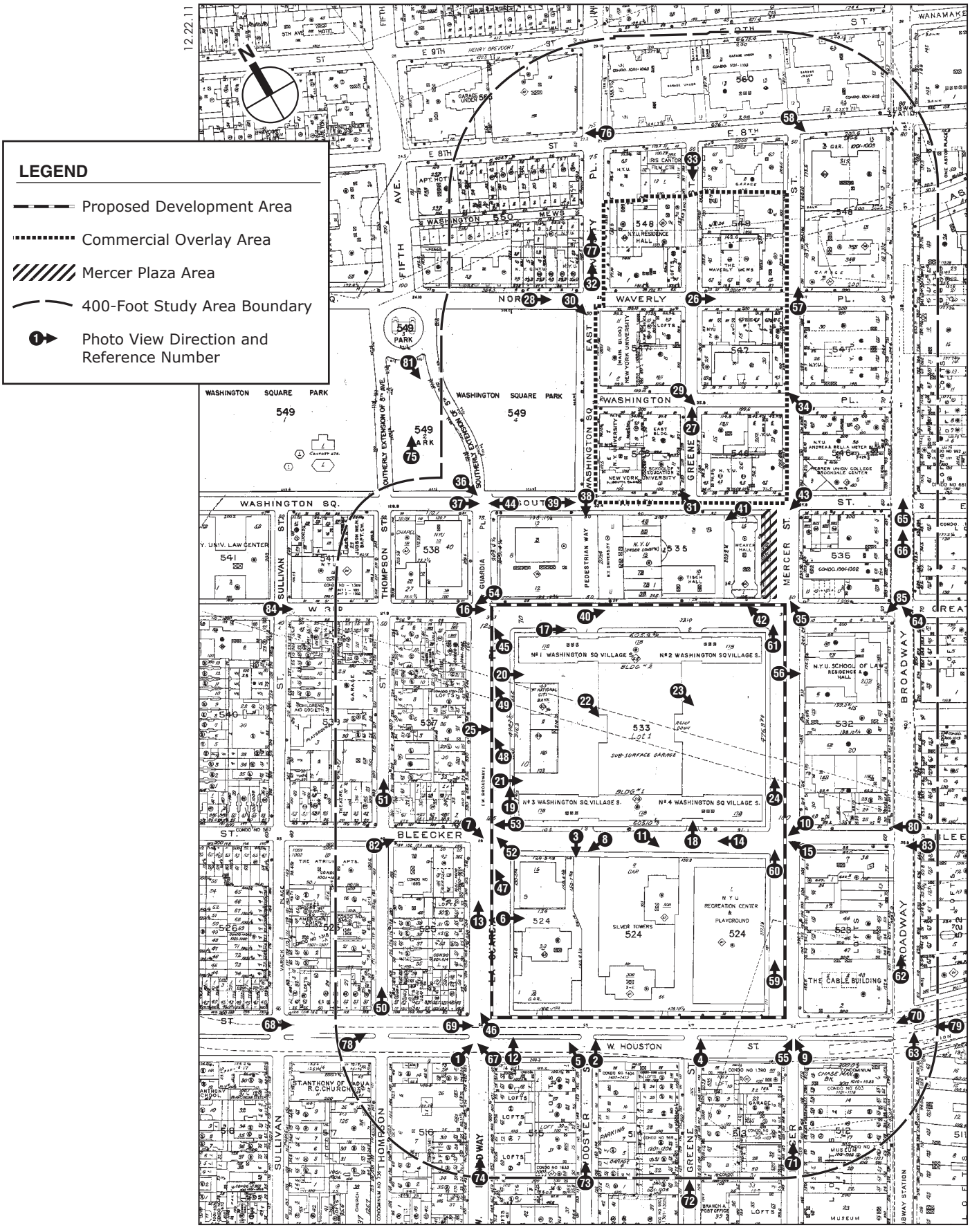
A. INTRODUCTION

This attachment considers the potential of the proposed project to affect urban design and visual resources. As defined in the *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. The following analysis considers a 400-foot study area where the Proposed Actions would be most likely to influence land use patterns and the built environment (see **Figures 8-1** and **8-3** for a map and aerial photograph of the 400-foot study area). Consistent with the land use study area, this analysis also considers a larger ¼-mile study to encompass longer views to the project area (see **Figures 8-2** and **8-3** for a map and aerial photograph of the ¼-mile study area). This analysis addresses the urban design and visual resources of the study areas for existing conditions, the future without the Proposed Actions, and the future with the Proposed Actions in the interim 2021 analysis year and the 2031 analysis year when the project is expected to be completed.

Based on the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources is appropriate when there is the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning. Examples include projects that 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 would meet the threshold for a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources.

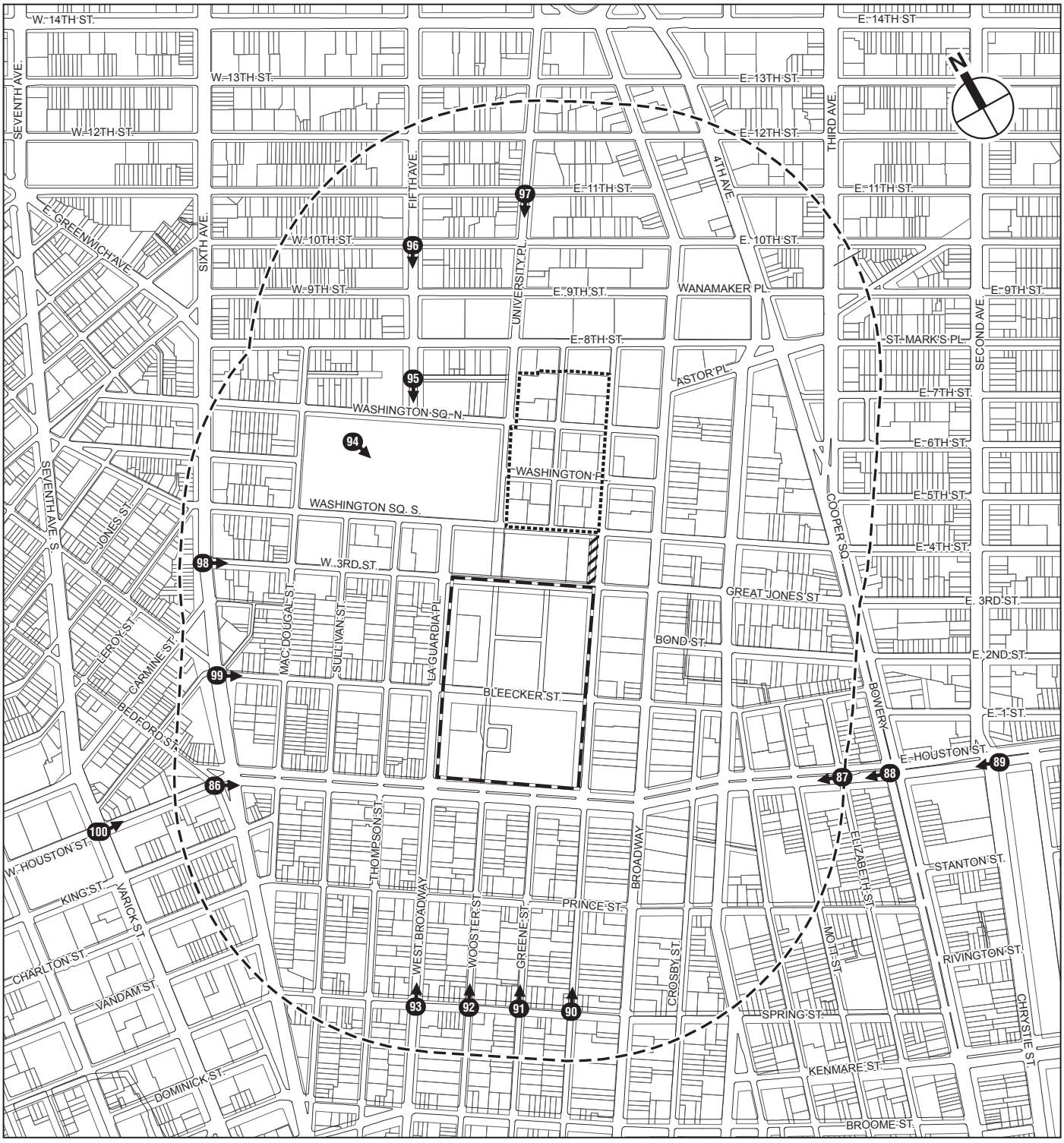
The *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines state that if the preliminary assessment shows that changes to the pedestrian environment are sufficiently significant to require greater explanation and further study, then a detailed analysis is appropriate. Examples include projects that would potentially obstruct 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



Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-1

NYU Core

12.22.11



Proposed Development Area

Commercial Overlay Area

Mercer Plaza Area

Study Area Boundary
(1/4-Mile Perimeter)

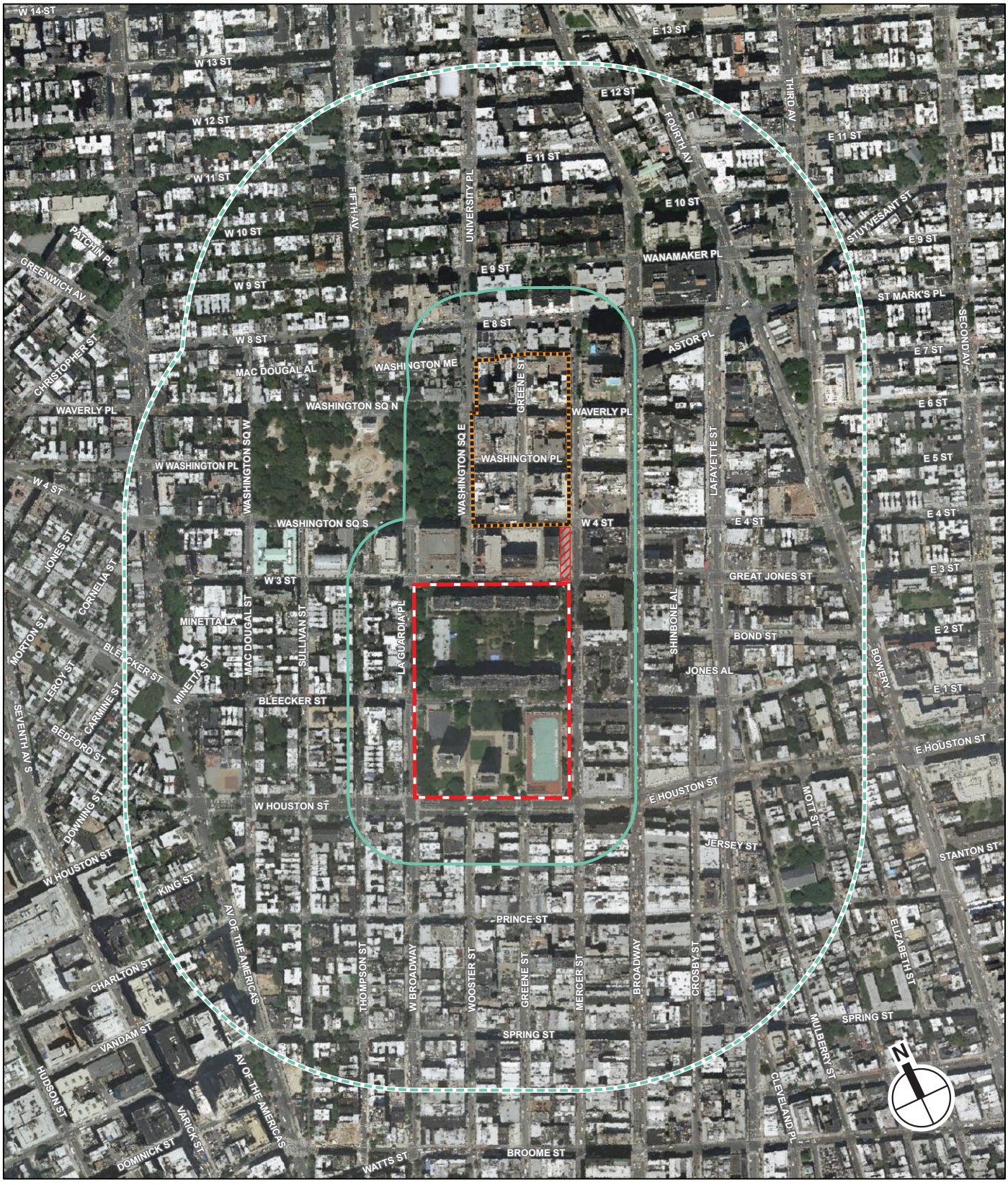
95 Photo View Direction
and Reference Number

Urban Design and Visual Resources
1/4-Mile Study Area

Figure 8-2

NYU Core

7.19.11



Proposed Development Area

Commercial Overlay Area

Mercer Plaza Area

Study Area Boundary (400-Foot Perimeter)

Study Area Boundary (1/4-Mile Perimeter)

0 400 1000 FEET

SCALE

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Aerial Photograph

Figure 8-3

NYU Core

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 Actions would include an LSGD and could potentially make noticeable alterations to the streetscape of the surrounding area through landscape changes to the Proposed Development Area and by noticeably changing the scale of buildings, compared to the future without the Proposed Actions. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would meet the threshold for a detailed assessment of urban design and visual resources. This analysis is provided below.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

URBAN DESIGN

The Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on urban design or visual in either the 2021 or 2031 analysis years. As described below, the Proposed Actions would have beneficial streetscape effects that would improve the pedestrian experience through: the landscape changes to the University Village and Washington Square Village sites that would provide new, publicly accessible open space and more pedestrian-friendly site perimeters with lowered fences and new plantings; the creation of a widened and enhanced pedestrian walkway through the South Block of the Proposed Development Area; the replacement of mostly windowless buildings on the South Block with new buildings that would have transparent and active ground floors; the creation of new buildings with transparent ground floors and a new publicly accessible open space on the North Block of the Proposed Development Area that would be at grade and open to the adjacent streets; the recladding of the ground floors of the Washington Square Village buildings to increase transparency; and the addition of new ground-floor neighborhood retail spaces to existing buildings in the Commercial Overlay Area.

While the proposed, approximately 768,100-square-foot (above grade) Zipper Building on the South Block would be larger in terms of floor area than other buildings in the study areas, it would be massed to respond to the different existing contexts along Houston and Mercer Streets and to the adjacent University Village complex. Its massing of staggered, narrow towers of varying heights above a low-rise base would serve to break up the building's bulk, put the largest building component on West Houston Street, and pull some of the mass away from Mercer Street and the University Village complex. The varied massing and staggered heights would reference the arrangement of buildings across Mercer Street and on the surrounding streets where there are variegated heights. At its tallest point, the Zipper Building would be no taller than the University Village towers. Overall, it would only be approximately 133,100 square feet larger than the Washington Square Village south residential building (which is approximately 635,000 square feet above grade) and approximately 168,100 square feet larger than the Washington Square Village north residential building (which is approximately 600,000 square feet above grade). The floor areas of the proposed Bleecker, LaGuardia, and Mercer Buildings would fall within the range of building floor areas found in the study areas. The heights of all four proposed buildings would be in keeping with the range of existing building heights in the Proposed Development Area, Commercial Overlay Area, and 400-foot and ¼-mile study areas, where there are numerous buildings of comparable or taller height.

VIEW CORRIDORS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

It is not expected that the Proposed Actions would have significant adverse impacts on visual resources in the 400-foot or ¼-mile study areas. It is expected that the Bleecker and Zipper Buildings on the South Block of the Proposed Development Area would be visible from south of West Houston Street in certain northward view corridors, but in those view corridors the buildings would be background buildings to the existing mid-rise loft buildings lining those streets. As the Bleecker Building would be built to the lot line on LaGuardia Place, it would not obstruct northward views that include Washington Square Park, the Washington Square Arch, or 1 Fifth Avenue. From where the Bleecker and Zipper Buildings could potentially be seen from Washington Square Park and from the north on Fifth Avenue and University Place, they would be background buildings seen among numerous buildings of varying heights. Both buildings would be visible along Bleecker Street, from west of LaGuardia Place and from east of Mercer Street, along with the southern Washington Square Village residential building, but they would not block any significant views and their visibility would decrease from farther away due to intervening buildings. On West Houston Street, the Zipper Building would obscure eastward views of the Cable Building (a visual resource at Mercer Street), but this would not be a significant adverse impact, because the Cable Building would still be prominently visible in its immediate vicinity and in westward views on East Houston Street. Further, the University Village complex already partially obscures views of the Cable Building from western vantage points on West Houston Street. The Zipper Building would change the views on Houston Street of the University Village towers, but this change would not be a significant adverse impact. From mid-block on Houston Street adjacent to the South Block, as well as from mid-block on Bleecker Street and LaGuardia Place, there would continue to be views of the three University Village towers as an integrated whole. From the west, the University Village towers would be in the foreground of the views and the Zipper Building would be viewed as another tall building on the South Block of the Proposed Development Area. In addition, the Zipper Building would be massed with the tallest (275-foot) portion on Mercer Street and a transitional shorter (138-foot-tall) tower volume between that tallest portion and Silver Tower I to create a space between the two equally tall towers that would maintain the prominent free-standing quality of Silver Tower I. From the east on East Houston Street, the Zipper Building would obscure views of 505 LaGuardia Place but those are not significant views of that tower or the other two University Village towers, as only the upper floors are visible from limited vantage points.

The LaGuardia and Mercer Buildings on the North Block of the Proposed Development Area would not be visible from the east or west within the study areas as there are no east-west view corridors to the sites of those proposed buildings. From locations to the north and south, it is expected that the LaGuardia Building would have limited visibility because it would be shorter than the two existing Washington Square Village residential buildings. The Mercer Building could likely be seen from the north in Washington Square Park and on Fifth Avenue and University Place, but only the uppermost 60 feet of the building would be visible behind the north Washington Square Village residential building on West 3rd Street and the building's limited visibility would have no effect on southward views. It is not expected that the Mercer Building would be visible in the northward view corridors on Mercer and Greene Streets because of the intervening Zipper Building.

PEDESTRIAN WIND CONDITIONS

A detailed pedestrian wind analysis was undertaken for the Proposed Development Area to assess whether the Proposed Actions 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 analysis was conducted in a wind tunnel using a scale model of the proposed and existing buildings in the Proposed Development Area, the existing and Proposed Actions' landscape elements, and surrounding buildings and topography within a 1,600 foot radius of the Proposed Development Area. Receptors were placed both on and off-site, in areas where pedestrian activity would be expected.

The analysis found that during the summer months (May through October), for both existing conditions and in the Future With the Proposed Actions, there is no potential for pedestrian wind conditions exceeding safety criteria. During the winter months (November through April), the wind tunnel analysis for existing conditions showed that wind conditions exceed safety criteria at one location—immediately southeast of the 505 LaGuardia building on the South Block. In the Future with the Proposed Actions, the analysis found that the elevated wind condition identified under existing conditions would be eliminated, and that there would be no potential for pedestrian wind conditions exceeding safety criteria at any other location. Therefore, no significant adverse urban design impacts would result from potential pedestrian wind conditions with the Proposed Actions.

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 Actions 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.

Sunlight and wind conditions also affect the pedestrian experience of a given area. A pedestrian wind analysis was conducted for the proposed development. The variation in building heights and street widths found in the study areas generally allow sunlight to reach much of the study areas throughout the day and this condition would not be significantly altered with the Proposed Actions. A discussion of the proposed development's potential to cast new incremental shadows is discussed in Chapter 6, "Shadows."

In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this analysis considers both a ¼-mile study area that is coterminous with that of the land use, zoning, and public policy study area and a smaller, 400-foot study area surrounding the proposed Development Area and Commercial Overlay Area. This analysis addresses the urban design and visual resources of the Proposed Development and Commercial Overlay Areas and the study areas for existing conditions, the future without the Proposed Actions, and the future with the Proposed Actions in the interim 2021 analysis year and the 2031 analysis year when the project is expected to be completed.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the proposed Development Area is comprised of two superblocks bounded by LaGuardia Place, West 3rd Street, Mercer Street, and East Houston Street and separated by Bleecker Street. The urban design of the two superblocks is described below.

SOUTH BLOCK

The south block is developed with five free-standing buildings—three 30-story residential towers organized around private open spaces at the center and southwest corner of the block (known as University Village), a free-standing 1-story grocery store at the northwest corner of the block, and the freestanding 1-story NYU Coles Sports and Recreation Center (the Coles building) along the eastern end of the block. Public open spaces are located along the block's LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street frontages. While the arrangement of buildings and public and private open spaces on the South Block creates a feeling of openness in the midst of the surrounding, densely developed blocks of loft buildings, tenements, and institutional buildings, the street frontages of the South Block are not particularly inviting to the pedestrian due to the mostly windowless streetwalls of the grocery store and gymnasium, the placement of the three University Village towers away from the street with their building entrances facing the interior of the block and not the adjacent streets, and the tall fences that surround most of the open spaces and the perimeter of University Village complex and some landscaped areas in the sidewalk along Bleecker Street.

The University Village complex comprises three identical 30-story (275-foot-tall) free-standing residential towers and associated landscaping features (see view 1 of **Figure 8-4**). Silver Tower II is located in the middle of the block, Silver Tower I is located mid-block on West Houston Street, approximately 33 feet from the street, and 505 LaGuardia Place is located near the southwest corner of block, set back approximately 119 feet from West Houston Street and 58 feet from the lot line on LaGuardia Place. Due to a below-grade parking garage with entrances on West Houston Street, the base planes of Silver Tower II and 505 LaGuardia Place are elevated above West Houston Street and LaGuardia Place. Sloping lawns enclosed by tall metal fences lie between the buildings and the adjacent sidewalks. Access to the site from LaGuardia Place is by a concrete stair. As described in Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources," the towers are arranged in a pinwheel configuration around a central 100- by 100-foot lawn that maximizes privacy from the street and views from the towers. The three towers are reinforced concrete structures designed in the Brutalist style. The tower facades rise flush from the ground without setbacks and are articulated with grids of deeply recessed windows, unfenestrated sections of concrete panels, and vertical recesses at the corners. Each tower contains 227,147



University Village, view northeast on Houston Street from LaGuardia Place **1**



University Village, view north from Houston Street at Wooster Street **2**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, South Block
Figure 8-4

gross square feet and has an approximately rectangular footprint with notched corners, measuring 108 feet by 70 feet. Concrete plazas are located at the base of each tower facing the central lawn.

A brick driveway with concrete sidewalks extends north-south through University Village between West Houston and Bleecker Streets and circles the central lawn, separating it from the three towers (see view 2 of **Figure 8-4**). Signs at the entrances indicate that the site is private property. The lawn has a concrete curb and contains a 36-foot-tall concrete sculpture—the Bust of Sylvette, which is an enlargement of a Pablo Picasso cubist piece (see view 3 of **Figure 8-5**). This statue has limited visibility from the sidewalks adjacent to the site. A playground and small seating area with concrete benches and trees is located at the southeast corner of the complex on West Houston Street. The playground is enclosed with a concrete wall (which is several feet tall) and a tall metal fence along the street. The seating area is located in a corner lawn that has minimal visibility from the West Houston Street sidewalk. An adjacent, approximately 6-foot-wide north-south pedestrian walkway runs through the block between West Houston and Bleecker Streets west of the gymnasium (see view 4 of **Figure 8-5**). The entrance to the walkway on West Houston Street is difficult to discern as it is narrow and flanked by the blank walls of the Coles building and the wall and fence surrounding the playground, and it is not inviting to pedestrians. The grounds of the University Village complex are open to this walkway, but there are only two connecting paths at the north and south ends, and Silver Tower II faces away from the walkway and does not have an entrance from it. The small strip of grass between the tower and the walkway acts as a buffer rather than integrating the walkway into the larger site. Additional greenery is located around the perimeter of the University Village complex: a large grove of trees is located on the north side of the site near Bleecker Street (see view 3 of **Figure 8-5**); sloped, grassy lawns are located on the south sides of 505 LaGuardia Place and Silver Tower I, adjacent to West Houston Street (see view 2 of **Figure 8-4** and view 5 of **Figure 8-6**); and a raised concrete planter containing trees is located along the north side of the plaza at the base of 505 LaGuardia Place, adjacent to the grocery store (see view 6 of **Figure 8-6**). The lawns do not have any additional plantings and the grass plots are crossed by concrete paths. The perimeter lawns and grove are not usable greenspaces as they are enclosed with tall fences where they front on streets, the internal driveway, and the public walkways that run north-south through the site at the east and west edges of the University Village complex. These fences and the placement and orientation of the buildings away from the street behind non-accessible planted areas distance the University Village complex from the surrounding area and emphasize its private ownership and limited accessibility to the public. Additional elements of the complex that physically and visually limit pedestrian access are two concrete-framed ramps to below-grade parking garages on West Houston Street and the tall flight of ten concrete stairs to the plaza north of 505 LaGuardia Place that provides the only access to the complex from LaGuardia Place (see **Figure 8-6**). The Time Landscape (described below) partially obscures views of the stairs from LaGuardia Place.

The grocery store at the northwest corner of the South Block is a one-story 29,000-square-foot boxy brick building with a footprint that measures 130 feet by 119 feet. This architecturally undistinguished building has only a few windows on its west façade and at the northwest corner entrance on Bleecker Street (see view 7 of **Figure 8-7**). The north and east facades are blank. A sign and awning are located above the entrance and some small billboards are attached to the north façade. In warmer months, some café seats are placed along the Bleecker Street sidewalk. The south façade is a windowless brick wall; a raised concrete planter with trees is located between the grocery store and the concrete plaza north of 505 LaGuardia Place (see view 6 of



University Village, view south from Bleecker Street **3**



University Village, view north from Houston Street at Greene Street **4**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, South Block
Figure 8-5



University Village, view northwest from Houston Street at Wooster Street **5**



University Village, view east from LaGuardia Place to the base of 505 LaGuardia Place **6**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, South Block
Figure 8-6



Grocery Store, view southeast from LaGuardia Place at Bleecker Street **7**



Grocery Store, view southwest from Bleecker Street **8**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, South Block
Figure 8-7

Figure 8-6). The northeast corner of the building is cut away where there is a paved loading area lined on the east side by a tall chain link fence. A planted area with trees that is enclosed by metal fences and a concrete wall creates a buffer between the grocery store property and the University Village complex (see view 8 of **Figure 8-7**).

The approximately 136,000-square-foot Coles building occupies the eastern end of the South Block. It is an undistinguished 23-foot-tall rectangular brick building with limited fenestration (see **Figure 8-8**). The building is built to the property line but is set back 50-feet from Mercer Street behind open spaces and planted areas. The building's entrance is located on Mercer Street beyond a brick plaza. The only windows are located high up on the west façade facing the narrow through-block pedestrian walkway and University Village (see view 11 of **Figure 8-9**). The west façade does not invite pedestrians along the adjacent walkway, due to its lack of windows. The south façade fronting on Houston Street is blank, creating a barren stretch of sidewalk and partially obscuring the entrance to the adjacent pedestrian walkway, and the east and north facades are mostly blank except for some louvered openings. The building's north side has a lower section with a sloped, sky-lit roof. A chain link fence encircles the rooftop where there is a running track.

On LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street, open spaces are located at the edges of the South Block in strips of land under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) and within the mapped street footprints. The LaGuardia Place Strip is 45 feet wide and the Mercer Street Strip is 50 feet wide. The strips have curbs and sidewalks along the adjacent streets and appear as part of the block, partially obscuring views from the sidewalk to the University Village complex and the grocery store. The two open spaces on LaGuardia Place are the Time Landscape, which is maintained under the Greenstreets program, and the LaGuardia Corner Gardens. Located adjacent to 505 LaGuardia Place, the Time Landscape is an approximately 8,200-square-foot parcel that measures 25 feet by 40 feet. It is planted with native plants and trees that have matured over time and appears dense and unmanicured (see view 12 of **Figure 8-9**). The Time Landscape is completely enclosed with a tall metal fence. The LaGuardia Corner Gardens occupy an approximately 6,500-square-foot parcel, which has a length and width similar to that of the Time Landscape. The LaGuardia Corner Gardens are located in front of the grocery store and are enclosed with a tall chain link fence (see view 13 of **Figure 8-10**). The gardens contain trees, shrubs, and flowers and pathways with benches, and they are open to the public during limited hours. The fencing, however, makes them appear private.

On Mercer Street, there are three open spaces on the strip between West Houston and Bleecker Streets east of the Coles building. They are a dog run, a playground, and a paved open space with benches. Fences enclose the dog run and playground, and they contain some trees (see view 9 of **Figure 8-8**). The playground, which is currently closed to the public, is paved with a central sprinkler and some playground equipment. A disused area with benches is located between the playground and dog run. The brick plaza in front of the Coles building contains benches, trees, and two raised gardens (see view 10 of **Figure 8-8**). Between Mercer Street and LaGuardia Place, the widened sidewalk along the south side of Bleecker Street contains four areas planted with trees and shrubs that are enclosed by chain link fences (see view 14 of **Figure 8-10**). In addition, there is a wide, landscaped parcel adjacent to the Coles building's north façade.

As mentioned above, there are two narrow pedestrian walkways that traverse the South Block between West Houston and Bleecker Streets (see view 4 of **Figure 8-5** and view 12 of **Figure 8-9**). The eastern 6-foot-wide walkway is located on private property between the Coles building and University Village. The entrances—flanked by fences, walls, and the Coles building—are



Coles Building, view northwest on Mercer Street from Houston Street **9**



Coles Building, view southwest on Mercer Street from Bleecker Street **10**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, South Block
Figure 8-8



Coles Building, view southeast on Bleecker Street **11**



Time Landscape, view north from Houston Street **12**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, South Block
Figure 8-9



Community Gardens, view north on LaGuardia Place **13**



View southwest on Bleecker Street from west of Mercer Street **14**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, South Block
Figure 8-10

not inviting to the public. The Coles building has a largely windowless façade facing the walkway, which is partially lined by fences. Although most of the University Village site is open to the walkway, there are only two connecting paths and Silver Tower II does not have an entrance on the walkway. The walkway on the western part of the block is located between the Time Landscape and the LaGuardia Community Gardens on the LaGuardia Place Strip and 505 LaGuardia Place and the grocery store. This pedestrian walkway is lined by tall fences and concrete walls that enclose planted areas, and like the other walkway it is not inviting to pedestrians.

In general, pedestrians walking adjacent to and through the South Block are faced with tall fences, inaccessible lawns and planted areas, the mostly windowless walls of the Coles building and grocery store, a loading dock and two parking garage entrance ramps, and buildings that are set far back from, and face away from, the street.

NORTH BLOCK

The North Block is developed with the Washington Square Village complex. In addition, there are public open spaces and planted areas in the strips that run along the east and west edges of the block. Washington Square Village consists of two tall residential buildings oriented east-west on Bleecker and West 3rd Streets, a one-story retail building on LaGuardia Place, and a plaza, playground, and partially underground parking garage between the two residential buildings. The interior open spaces have limited visibility from the sidewalks around the property.

The two residential buildings (the north building comprises Washington Square Village 1 & 2 and the south building comprises Washington Square Village 3 & 4) are parallel slab-like towers set back from the lot line behind ornamental viewing gardens enclosed by low fences (**Figure 8-11** and view 17 of Figure 8-12). The buildings are set back 15 feet from the lot line on LaGuardia Place, 12 feet from the lot line on Mercer Street, 30 feet from the lot line on West 3rd Street, and 30 feet from the lot line on Bleecker Street. In addition, the LaGuardia Place Strip on LaGuardia Place is 45 feet wide, and the Mercer Street Strip on Mercer Street is 50 feet wide. Each building contains approximately 618,000 square feet, has a footprint that measures approximately 605 feet by 126 feet, and is 17 stories (158 feet) tall. Further, each building has a recessed two-story base, above which the building rises to its full 17-story height. The base is separated into bays by pilasters that project slightly from the façade. The north and south facades of both buildings are characterized by recessed and projecting bays that are further articulated by long, projecting balconies and orange, yellow, and blue glazed brick. The short (east and west) facades of the buildings are clad in blue-gray metal panels and have projecting balconies. Two driveways with sidewalks run through the block between Bleecker and West 3rd Streets, passing through portals at the base of each building (see **Figure 8-12**). Yellow curbs, speed bumps, and stop signs mark these portals as primarily vehicular entrances, although they have approximately 11-foot-wide sidewalks. An open canopy that is supported on columns projects over each of the wide, vehicular passageways, which roughly align with the driveway and the eastern pedestrian walkways through the South Block. The enclosed, planted areas in front of each building contain trees and shrubs (see view 17 of **Figure 8-12**).

The one-story retail building is located on LaGuardia Place between the ends of the two residential buildings, set back 17 feet from the lot line. It is also set well back from the LaGuardia Place sidewalk behind planted areas within the LaGuardia Place Strip. The retail building is a low, rectangular structure with multiple storefronts (see view 19 of **Figure 8-13**).



Washington Square Village, view west on Bleecker Street from Mercer Street **15**



Washington Square Village, view east on West 3rd Street from LaGuardia Place **16**



Washington Square Village, view east on West 3rd Street near west driveway **17**



Washington Square Village, view north from Bleecker Street along east driveway **18**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, North Block
Figure 8-12



Washington Square Village, view north of the LaGuardia Place retail building **19**



Washington Square Village, view east of the area between the north residential building and the retail building **20**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, North Block
Figure 8-13

Two of the retail spaces have wood decks for outdoor seating. The building contains approximately 34,000 square feet and measures 80 feet by 213 feet. Paved areas are located between the retail building and the two residential towers; metal fences restrict access to those areas from the sidewalk on LaGuardia Place (see view 20 of **Figure 8-13** and view 21 of **Figure 8-14**).

The private courtyard between the two Washington Square Village residential buildings is accessible from the street only through the portals and driveways, and it is divided into three distinct areas: an elevated 1.5-acre landscaped central plaza; grassy areas enclosed by chainlink fencing east of the retail building; and a playground and two paved parking and service areas on the east side of the site. The elevated plaza is located between the two driveways and above a partially underground parking garage (see view 22 of **Figure 8-14**). Access to the parking garage is from each driveway near the middle of the elevated plaza. Although pedestrians do not appear to be prohibited from walking through the block along the driveways, the elevated plaza—which is planted with trees and gardens and contains seating areas—is private property not required to be open to the public. It is accessed by stairs with fences, and views into the elevated plaza are limited from the driveways. Similarly, the large playground on the east side of the block is for building residents and neighbors within a limited area and is enclosed with a chainlink fence. The playground contains metal and plastic playground equipment, sandboxes, swing sets, tire swings, benches, and trees (see view 23 of **Figure 8-15**). The playground has limited visibility from Mercer Street due to fencing on the Mercer Street Strip and its location on the far side of the eastern driveway, but it contains numerous tall trees that add greenery to the Mercer Street streetscape. There is no access to the playground from Mercer Street.

On Mercer Street, the Mercer Playground occupies the 50-foot-wide Mercer Street Strip between West 3rd and Bleecker Streets. Enclosed with a tall, metal fence, the approximately 14,500-square-foot main portion of the Mercer Playground is a paved area with elevated grassy areas, benches, trees, and boulders (see view 24 of **Figure 8-15**). At each end of the NYCDOT strip are enclosed planted areas of approximately 1,700 and 1,900 square feet. The 45-foot-wide LaGuardia Place Strip is developed with the LaGuardia Landscape, which total approximately 19,700 square feet. The gardens are large, irregularly shaped ornamental plots planted with vines, bushes, and tall, mature trees (see view 19 of **Figure 8-13**). Low, arched metal railings surround the gardens, which also include decorative streetlamps, and paved paths pass through the gardens between the sidewalk along LaGuardia Place and the Washington Square Village retail building. A bronze statue of Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia raised on a square, masonry base is located within the LaGuardia Place Strip midway between West 3rd and Bleecker Streets (see **Figure 8-16**).

COMMERCIAL OVERLAY AREA

The Commercial Overlay Area consists of six full or partial blocks developed with 26 buildings. The four full blocks are small, square blocks that measure approximately 200 feet by 200 feet. The two partial blocks are parts of rectangular blocks that measure approximately 200 feet by 350 feet. The Commercial Overlay Area is bounded by Mercer Street, West 4th Street, Washington Square East/University Place, and a line approximately 115 feet south of East Eighth Street. The north-bound Greene Street, east-bound Waverly Place, and west-bound Washington Place bisect the area. The streets that run through and adjacent to the Commercial Overlay Area are narrow at 49 to 60 feet wide, with the exception of the 70-foot wide Washington Place and the section of University Place north of Waverly Place, which is 75 feet wide. All of the streets are one way. Sections of Greene Street between West 4th Street and



Washington Square Village, view east of the area between the south residential building and the retail building **21**



Washington Square Village, view southeast of the elevated private plaza from the west driveway **22**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, North Block
Figure 8-14



Washington Square Village, view southeast of the private playground **23**



Mercer Playground, view northwest from near Bleecker Street **24**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, North Block
Figure 8-15



LaGuardia Gardens, views east of Fiorello LaGuardia statue **25**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
Proposed Development Area, North Block
Figure 8-16

Waverly Place have exposed Belgian block paving. Sidewalks in the Commercial Overlay Area are wide. Street trees are scattered throughout the area but there are blocks with no greenery. Only a few of the buildings contain ground-floor retail and most of the retail uses are located along the north side of Waverly Place. Many ground floors continue to retain their original industrial character of heavy stone piers framing openings, and interior views are mostly of lobbies.

The 26 buildings in the Commercial Overlay Area are all clad in brick and stone, and they range in height from 4 to 21 stories (50 to 240 feet), with most being in the 6 to 10 story range (61 to 147 feet). Although 22 of the buildings now contain NYU academic and dormitory uses, the majority of buildings were originally constructed as manufacturing lofts (see **Figure 8-17**). There are also former tenements, two tall apartment buildings (at 1 University Place and 12-16 Washington Place), and an office building at 100 Washington Square East that is now the NYU Silver Center academic building (see **Figure 8-18** and view 30 of **Figure 8-19**). Most buildings have wide street frontages—the Silver Center occupies an entire approximately 200-foot-long blockfront—but there are also buildings on narrow lots. Buildings range in size from approximately 14,000 square feet (a former 4-story tenement at 7 Washington Place) to 252,000 square feet (the 10-story Silver Center). For the most part, streetwalls are consistent throughout the Commercial Overlay Area and buildings tend to rise flush for their full heights without setbacks. Buildings that have setbacks are the 240-foot-tall (218,000-square-foot) apartment building at 1 University Place, which has upper floor setbacks that culminate in a tower; the 143-foot-tall (129,000-square-foot) apartment building at 12-16 Washington Place that has three floors of setbacks; and the 161-foot-tall (127,000-square-foot) NYU academic building at 35 West 4th Street that has five set back floors and corner pavilions (see **Figure 8-18** and view 31 of **Figure 8-19**). In addition, the 6-story NYU residential building at 15 Washington Place has an entrance courtyard facing the street, and the 9-story (161,000-square-foot) NYU dormitory (Weinstein Hall) at 5 University Place is set back from the lot lines on both University Place, where there are stairs and ramps to the entrance, and Greene Street where there are loading docks (see **Figures 8-20** and **8-21**). As most buildings in the Commercial Overlay Area date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they are ornamented with columns and pilasters, arched openings, rustication, cartouches, keystones, floral carvings, and projecting cornices. Large ground-floor window and door openings framed by heavy piers are indicative of the original loft uses. In comparison to the bustling retail character of Broadway to the east and the open, green and lively character of Washington Square Park to the west, the narrow streets of the Commercial Overlay Area have little ground floor activity.

MERCER PLAZA AREA

The approximately 6,400-square-foot Mercer Plaza Area occupies the eastern end of the block bounded by West 4th, Mercer, and West 3rd Streets, and LaGuardia Place (Block 535). It is a public plaza with benches and raised areas planted with trees and bushes (see **Figure 8-22**). An NYU cogeneration facility is located below-grade within the Mercer Plaza area.

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

The 400-foot study area includes parts of three distinct Manhattan neighborhoods—Greenwich Village to the west and north, NoHo to the east, and SoHo to the south (and as described in Chapter 7, "Historic and Cultural Resources," much of the 400-foot study area falls within the



View southeast on Waverly Place from Greene Street **26**



View north on Greene Street from Washington Place **27**



1 University Place, view east on Washington Square North **28**



12-16 Washington Place, view east on Washington Place from west of Greene Street **29**

Urban Design and Visual Resources

Commercial Overlay Area

Figure 8-18



Silver Center at 100 Washington Place, view southeast from Washington Square North **30**



35 West 4th Street, view north at Greene Street **31**



View north on Washington Square East from Waverly Place, showing Weinstein Hall **32**



View south on Greene Street of Weinstein Hall from East 8th Street **33**

Urban Design and Visual Resources

Commercial Overlay Area

Figure 8-20



View northwest on Washington Place from Mercer Street **34**



View north on Mercer Street at West 3rd Street **35**

boundaries of historic districts within those neighborhoods). The study area is densely developed with purpose-built NYU academic buildings along Washington Square South/West 4th Street, tenements on the blocks west of LaGuardia Place between West 3rd and West Houston Streets, tall loft buildings along the east side of Mercer Street and on Broadway, mid-rise loft and store buildings on the blocks south of West Houston Street, and row houses and apartment buildings to the north of Washington Square Park, which is an important urban design element of the study area. These areas, which are described in more detail below, have distinct urban design characters and neighborhood feelings: the institutional blocks to the north and west have the feeling of a central business district; the tenement blocks to the west have a dense but low-rise residential character enlivened with numerous restaurants, bars, live music venues, and retail stores in keeping with the larger Greenwich Village neighborhood of which they are a part; Broadway is a bustling retail corridor lined with a diversity of buildings and marked with a profusion of signage; and the blocks to the south are clearly part of the architecturally unique Soho Cast-Iron district of narrow streets paved with Belgian blocks and lined with low- and mid-rise cast iron and masonry buildings designed in Classical styles that contain ground-floor boutiques and restaurants.

Two major streets run through the study area—Houston Street, a six-lane east-west street with a central planted median with some seating, and Broadway, a four-lane south-bound street. The other study area streets are narrow at 50 and 60 feet. Although the study area streets are laid out in a grid, block shapes and arrangements vary. Sidewalk widths vary; they are narrow in Soho and on the blocks west of LaGuardia Place but wider along Broadway and Mercer Street. There is a mix of square and rectangular blocks, as well as blocks with irregular shapes created by the diagonal alignment of East Eighth Street. The streets in the study area have a busy character due to the presence of NYU, Washington Square Park, and the shopping districts along Broadway and the streets south of West Houston Street in SoHo. For the most part, the buildings in the study area maintain the streetwall. Small breaks in the streetwall are created by a few buildings that are set back from the street. Loading docks, courtyards, and garage ramps create additional breaks in the streetwall. Street furniture includes modern and historic street lighting, parking regulation signs, fire hydrants, trash cans, phone booths, garbage cans, mailboxes, newspaper boxes, and fencing around the park and some of the buildings. Food carts are numerous along Broadway. In addition, awnings and banners are a common feature of the study area, especially along Broadway and the blocks south of Houston Street. Street trees are found throughout the area and are most predominant on the blocks west of LaGuardia Place.

The block between the Proposed Development Area and the Commercial Overlay Area (Block 535) is developed with large NYU academic buildings, a pedestrian passageway, and an elevated plaza. At the eastern end, it contains the Mercer Plaza Area. The grade of the block is not consistent, and the buildings in the middle of the block are elevated above the street. The five buildings on the block date to different periods of the 20th century, with Bobst Library, Tisch Hall, and Warren Weaver Hall contemporaneous with the University Village complex. The 470,000-square-foot Bobst Library occupies the western end of the block. It has a 195-foot by 209-foot footprint and it is 151 feet (12 stories) tall. It is a large and bulky building massed without setbacks, rising flush from ground level to its full height (see view 36 of **Figure 8-23**). The building has large amounts of blank masonry wall surface with fenestration taking the form of clusters of window columns that extend from ground level to the roof parapet. Most of the ground level wall surfaces are solid masonry, but there are some deeply recessed ground-floor windows on the east, south, and west facades and the entrance is on the north (Washington Square South) façade (see view 37 of **Figure 8-23**). A wide pedestrian passageway runs north-



Bobst Library, view southeast from Washington Square Park **36**

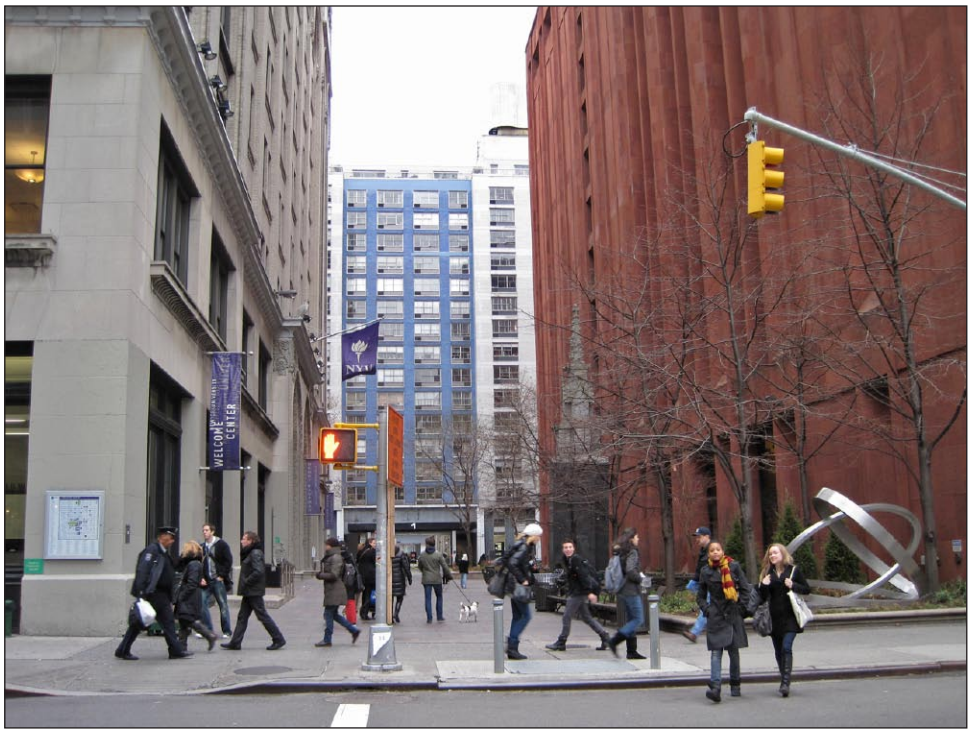


Bobst Library, view east on Washington Square South **37**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area, Block 535
Figure 8-23

south through the block on the east side of the Bobst Library. The paved passageway is roughly aligned with the western Wooster Street driveway through Washington Square Village and it contains some elevated planted areas, benches, and a Gothic spire placed on a podium, which came from a building from the original NYU Greenwich Village campus (see view 38 of **Figure 8-24**). The 11-story (155-foot-tall) NYU Shimkin Hall occupies a former loft building on the east side of the pedestrian passageway. Clad in brick and stone, this building has a tripartite arrangement of base, shaft, and capital, double-height arched entrances on West 4th and West 3rd Streets and on the pedestrian passageway, large ground-floor windows, arched window bays framed by pilasters on the shaft, and a loggia of half-columns at the capital (see view 39 of **Figure 8-24** and view 40 of **Figure 8-25**). Two buildings of the NYU Stern School of Business are attached to Shimkin Hall, and they form an "L" around an elevated public plaza on West 4th Street (see view 41 of **Figure 8-25**). The 21,000-square-foot plaza is elevated several feet above West 4th Street and accessed by stairs and ramps. It is a mostly empty space with a few benches and trees in planters. Together, the three buildings of the Stern School of Business contain 305,000 square feet. The Kaufman Management Education Center, which is adjacent to Shimkin Hall, has a rectangular through-block footprint and is 130 feet tall at its highest point. Clad in masonry panels with square windows, the building steps back from West 4th Street above the 4th and 8th floors and from West 3rd Street above the 3rd, 7th, and 9th floors. The building entrance is a four-story rounded pavilion with columns that fronts on the elevated plaza; there is no entrance on West 3rd Street and the ground floor of that southern façade is mostly windowless (see **Figure 8-25**). The second component of the L-plan is the 9-story (115-foot-tall) Tisch Hall that is set back behind the plaza. This building's design is similar to that of Bobst Library, although it has more windows and a rectangular footprint. On West 3rd Street, the building is raised above and set back from the street behind a stone wall capped by a tall metal fence (see view 42 of **Figure 8-26**). A stair and opening in the wall provides access to the plaza from the south. The free-standing 119,000-square-foot Warren Weaver Hall sits between the plaza in front of Tisch Hall and the Mercer Plaza Area at the eastern end of the block. It is a 14-story (164-foot-tall) brick and metal building that fronts on the Mercer Plaza Area (see view 43 of **Figure 8-26**). The building has one-story windowless brick wings on West 4th and West 3rd Streets. These wings have some louvered openings and mechanical equipment on their roofs, and the wing on West 3rd Street is raised above the street and partially surrounded by metal fencing (see view 42 of **Figure 8-26**). The main portion of the building rises for its full height without setbacks and is articulated with projecting brick piers framing metal window bays and there are projecting bay windows below the parapet. Together, the buildings on this block present secondary, rear facades to West 3rd Street that create a monotonous streetwall across from Washington Square Village.

The 232,000-square-foot NYU Kimmel Center sits across LaGuardia Place from the Bobst Library and the northwest corner of Washington Square Village. It is an 11-story, 160-foot-tall institutional building clad in masonry and glass. The facades have the appearance of masonry veneers applied to a glass building with the glass walls fully revealed at the corners and on the upper floors. The bulk of the Kimmel Center is set back from Washington Square South behind a one-story base with a large glass-enclosed entrance stair (see view 44 of **Figure 8-27**). The building is also set back from LaGuardia Place behind that one-story extension (see view 45 of **Figure 8-27**) and from West 3rd Street behind a three-story portion. The upper floors have the form of a Mansard roof; the facades angle back and the corners are cut out. There is a canopied pedestrian entrance on LaGuardia Place and a vehicular loading entrance is located on West 3rd Street. The ground floor along LaGuardia Place is articulated with large recesses that contain display windows for posters and other items.



View south on pedestrian passageway from West 4th Street **38**



NYU Shimkin Hall, view east on Washington Square South **39**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area, Block 535
Figure 8-24



View east on West 3rd Street adjacent to pedestrian passageway **40**



Kaufman Management Education Center, view southwest from West 4th Street **41**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area, Block 535
Figure 8-25



View west on West 3rd Street from Mercer Street **42**



Warren Weaver Hall, view southwest at Mercer and West 4th Streets **43**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area, Block 535
Figure 8-26



NYU Kimmel Center, view west on Washington Square South **44**



NYU Kimmel Center, view north on LaGuardia Place from West 3rd Street **45**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-27

LaGuardia Place and the blocks to the west between West 3rd and West Houston Streets are mostly lined by low-rise tenements designed in historical residential styles. These buildings tend to be clad in brick with stone trim. Most have ground-floor storefronts, many of which have been altered, and many have lost their original cornices. On the west side of LaGuardia Place, across from the Proposed Development Area, most buildings are four and five stories and located on narrow lots (see **Figures 8-28** and **8-29**). The storefronts are mostly restaurants. The block between Bleecker and West 3rd Streets also contains an 8-story (100-foot-tall) brick loft building at 536 LaGuardia Place (see view 48 of **Figure 8-29**), which houses the AIA Center for Architecture on the ground floor, and a 13-story (143-foot-tall) residential building located at the southwest corner of West 3rd Street and LaGuardia Place (see view 49 of **Figure 8-29**). That building has a two-story portion located along its street frontages. The upper floors are clad in brick and stone and have large, concrete corner balconies. The AIA Center for Architecture has large ground-floor windows that provide views into the ground and basement level exhibit spaces. The buildings on the blocks west of LaGuardia Place range from 3 to 7 stories and are primarily tenements on narrow lots with ground-floor storefronts that contain a variety of retail uses (see **Figures 8-30** and **8-31** and view 54 of **Figure 8-32**). There is also a 3-story parking garage (at 225 Thompson Street), a 7-story modern, brick apartment building with metal balconies at the southeast corner of Bleecker and Thompson Streets, and a large 10-story brick apartment building that occupies the full blockfront along the south side of Bleecker Street between Thompson and Sullivan Streets. That building, known as the Atrium Apartments, has a central light court on Bleecker Street and a projecting, bracketed cornice (see view 53 of **Figure 8-31**).

The east side of Mercer Street between West Houston and East Eighth Street is primarily lined by low- and mid-rise brick and stone loft and residential buildings. Many of the buildings extend through the block to also front on Broadway. Several large buildings are of note. The 204,000-square-foot 9-story (142-foot-tall) Cable Building occupies the southern end of the block bounded by Mercer, Bleecker, and West Houston Streets, and Broadway. It is a commercial building that houses a movie theater on the Mercer Street side. The brick and stone Cable Building has chamfered corners and is richly ornamented with arched windows, scrolled keystones, cartouches and roundels, floral carvings, and a crested cornice (see view 55 of **Figure 8-32**). A 307,000-square-foot NYU Law School residence and academic building occupies the north end of the block bounded by Mercer, West 3rd, and Bleecker Streets, and Broadway. This building has a U-plan organized around a large courtyard on Mercer Street that is located across from the north building of Washington Square Village. The NYU Law School building has a modernist design and is massed with a 20-story (194-foot-tall) portion parallel to and set back from Mercer Street, an 8-story wing set back from West 3rd Street behind a planted area enclosed by a metal fence, and a 6-story wing on the south side of the courtyard. Partly enclosed by tall metal fencing, the courtyard contains some planted areas and benches (see view 56 of **Figure 8-33**). Two large apartment towers occupy the block bounded East Eighth Street, Broadway, Waverly Place, and Mercer Street (see view 57 of **Figure 8-33**). They are separated by ramps to below-grade parking garages. The building on the south half of the block at 300 Mercer Street is 455,000 square feet and 34 stories (303 feet) tall. It is set back from Waverly Place and Mercer Street behind an elevated plaza, and it has a slab form with corner balconies, rising flush for its full height from the plaza. A low brick wall surrounds the property and the paved plaza contains some planted areas and benches. The building on the north half of the block at 310 Mercer Street is 512,000 square feet and 31 stories (327 feet) tall. It is also elevated above and set back from the street. The building has a recessed ground floor and large, round pilotis support the bulk of the building, which has recessed bays on the north and south facades and projecting balconies on the west and east facades (see view 58 of **Figure 8-34**). A stone wall



View northwest on LaGuardia Place from West Houston Street **46**



View northwest on LaGuardia Place from south of Bleecker Street **47**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-28



View northwest on LaGuardia Place from north of Bleecker Street **48**



View northwest on LaGuardia Place toward West 3rd Street **49**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-29



View northeast on Thompson Street from West Houston Street **50**



View northeast on Thompson Street between Bleecker and West 3rd Streets **51**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-30



View northwest on Bleecker Street from LaGuardia Place **52**



View southwest on Bleecker Street from LaGuardia Place **53**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-31



View southwest on West 3rd Street from LaGuardia Place **54**



Cable Building, view northeast at West Houston and Mercer Streets **55**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-32



NYU Law School building, view east of courtyard from Mercer Street **56**



View northeast on Mercer Street near Waverly Place **57**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-33



View southeast at Mercer and East 8th Streets **58**



View northeast on Mercer Street from East Houston Street **59**

surrounds the property, and the paved plaza at the base of the building contains some planted areas and a fountain.

As mentioned above, most of Mercer Street within the 400-foot study area contains low- to mid-rise residential and loft buildings. The remainder of the Mercer Street blockfront north of the Cable Building and across from the South Block of the Proposed Development Area contains three loft buildings of 5, 12, and 10 stories (which are 81 feet, 173 feet, and 150 feet tall, respectively), a 4-story apartment building with a narrow side yard enclosed by a fence, and a 7-story apartment building with a one-story wing containing a bookstore (see view 59 of **Figure 8-34**). There are a few other retail spaces on that block. The remainder of the Mercer Street blockfront south of the NYU Law School building and across from the North Block of the Proposed Development Area contains a six-story brick and stone loft building (which is now residential), a modern 14-story (129-foot-tall) brick residential building that has a setback above the 8th floor, a 6-story brick and stone residential building, and two brick and stone loft buildings of 8 and 12 stories (110 and 150 feet tall, respectively) (see view 60 of **Figure 8-35**). There are two ground-floor storefronts on this block. Also located on Mercer Street are a one-story boxy and non-descript grocery store at the northeast corner of West 3rd Street (see view 61 of **Figure 8-35**) and the modern Hebrew Union College Brookdale Center at the northeast corner of West 4th Street. The Brookdale Center is a 5-story brick building with a 3-story angled pavilion placed at the southwest corner. The pavilion is mostly windowless except for some narrow, glazed slits at the corners.

Within the 400-foot-study area, Broadway is lined with low- to mid-rise tenements and store and loft buildings clad in brick, stone, and cast iron, and tall modern NYU buildings and apartment buildings that range in height up to 204 feet tall, not including tall buildings discussed above that also front on Mercer Street (see **Figures 8-36** and **8-37**, and view 66 of **Figure 8-38**). Most buildings along Broadway are designed in historical period styles and are heavily ornamented. They are predominately residential and commercial with some NYU buildings located on the west side of Broadway between West 4th Street and Waverly Place, including a 204-tall building, at the southwest corner of Washington Place, that has a design similar to that of Bobst Library.

In the 400-foot-study area, West Houston Street is lined by a mix of low- to mid-rise residential and commercial buildings. As mentioned above, the north side of West Houston Street between Mercer Street and Broadway (directly across from the Coles building on the South Block) is occupied by the Cable Building. West of the Proposed Development Area between LaGuardia Place and Thompson Street, the north side of West Houston Street contains 3- to 6-story brick residential buildings with ground-floor storefronts, many of which have been altered (see view 67 of **Figure 8-38**). These buildings are modestly ornamented with stone window lintels and sills, bracketed cornices, and decorative brickwork. The south side of Houston Street is lined by: 5- and 6-story brick tenements between Thompson Street and West Broadway, which present former party walls and an interior courtyard to West Houston Street; an enclosed outdoor seating area for a restaurant in a 5-story building on West Broadway and a modern 2-story retail building clad in colorful tiles between West Broadway and Wooster Street; a modern cast iron residential building of 6 stories with an 8-story central portion, which is located between Wooster and Greene Streets; a modern brick and metal residential building with 6- and 8-story portions between Greene and Mercer Streets across West Houston Street from the Coles building; and a 12-story brick loft building between Mercer Street and Broadway cater-corner from the Coles building (see **Figure 8-39** and view 70 of **Figure 8-40**). The latter building has a former party wall fronting on West Houston Street that is partly ornamented with the artwork



View northeast on Mercer Street from Bleecker Street **60**



View northeast on Mercer Street from West 3rd Street **61**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-35



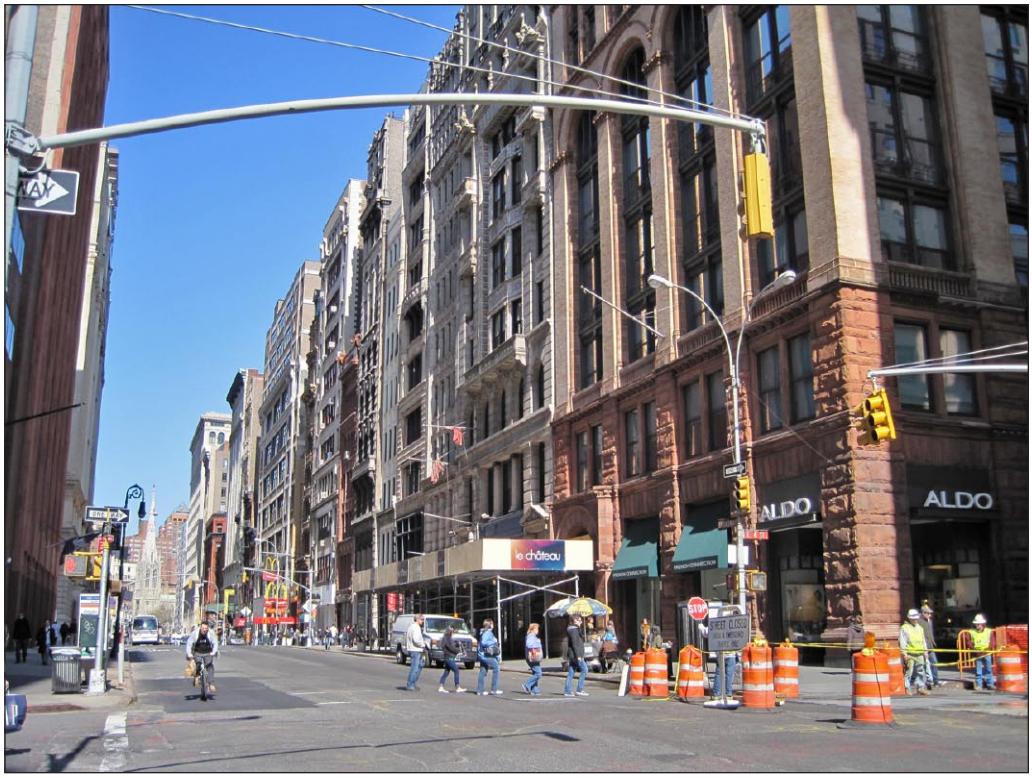
Northeast on Broadway from Houston Street **62**



Northwest on Broadway from Houston Street **63**



Northwest on Broadway from Great Jones Street **64**



Northeast on Broadway from 4th Street **65**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-37



Northwest on Broadway from 4th Street **66**



View northwest on West Houston Street from LaGuardia Place **67**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-38



View southeast on West Houston Street from Sullivan Street **68**



View southeast on West Houston Street from LaGuardia Place **69**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-39



View southwest on West Houston Street from Broadway **70**



View north on Mercer Street to West Houston Street **71**

"The Wall," which consists of teal I-beams projecting from a blue field. The blocks south of West Houston Street primarily consist of 4- to 6-story brick and cast iron sore and loft buildings with ground-floor storefronts, which were largely designed in the Italianate and French Second Empire styles (see view 71 of **Figure 8-40**, **Figure 8-41**, and view 74 of **Figure 8-42**).

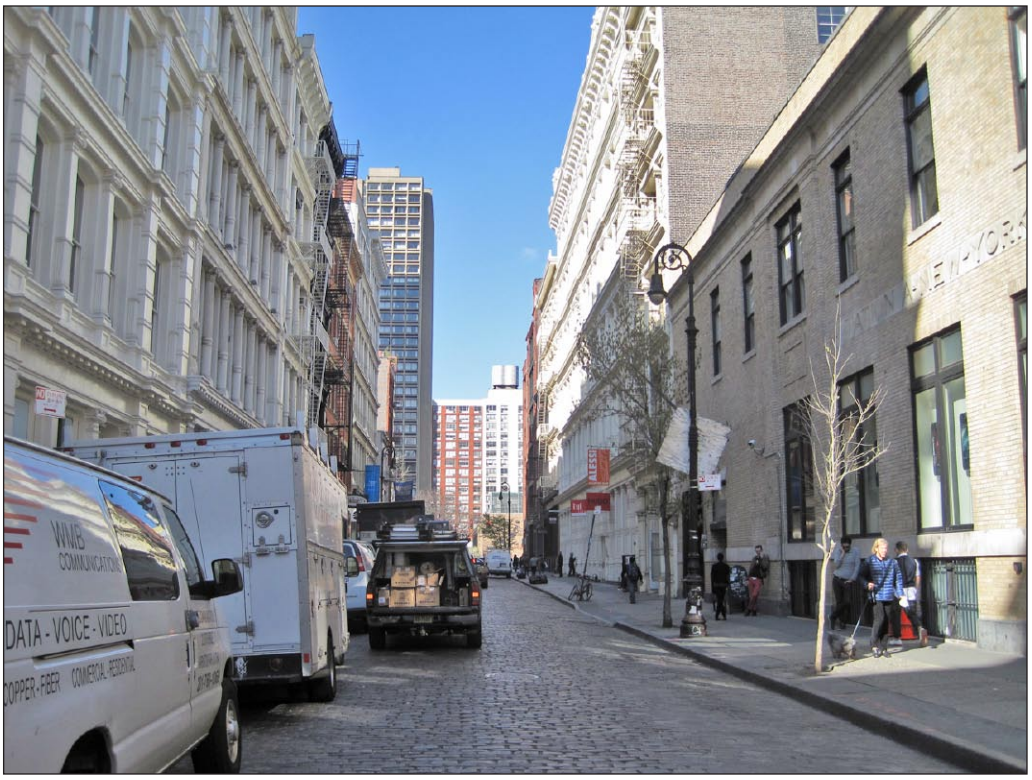
A section of Washington Square Park is located within the northwest portion of the 400-foot study area. The 9.75-acre park is bounded by Washington Square North (Waverly Place), Washington Square East, Washington Square South (West 4th Street), and Washington Square West. The park contains winding paths, landscaped areas, lawns, a dog run, a central plaza with a large circular fountain, statues, numerous matures trees, seating, and Washington Arch. Decorative metal fencing encloses the park. The park is often filled with food carts, musicians, and other street performers. The portion of the park within the study area includes comfort stations, landscaped areas, pathways, the Garibaldi Monument, an enlarged playground, and a portion of the central plaza. The park is currently being reconstructed and restored.

The block to the north of Washington Square Park contains a unique collection of buildings. Thirteen 3-, 4-, and 5-story brick row houses line the north side of Washington Square South between University Place and Fifth Avenue. These row houses are set back from the street behind basement areas enclosed with decorative metal fencing and most have stoops and wood-faced attic storeys with bracketed cornices. The private, NYU-owned Washington Mews cuts through the middle of the block between University Place and Fifth Avenue. With a brick and metal gate at each end, the private street is lined with 1- and 2-story row houses. At the northwest corner of the block is a 27-story (270-foot-tall) apartment building at 1 Fifth Avenue. This 238,000-square-foot building is designed in the Art Deco style, clad in brick and stone, and massed with chamfered cornices and multiple upper floor setbacks that create corner pavilions and culminate in a slender tower (see view 75 of **Figure 8-42**).

At the northern edge of the study area, modern apartment buildings with ground-floor storefronts line the north side of East Eighth Street between Fifth Avenue and Broadway. Two large apartment buildings of 392,000 and 420,000 square feet occupy the block bounded by Fifth Avenue, East Ninth Street, University Place, and East Eighth Street. The western building at 115 Fifth Avenue is 20 stories (184 feet) tall and the eastern building at 20 East Ninth Street is 25 stories (225 feet) tall at its highest portion. Both are clad in brick, have balconies, and are massed with recessed sections, light courts, and upper floor setbacks, and both have ground-floor retail (see view 76 of **Figure 8-43** and view 77 of **Figure 8-43**). The block bounded by University Place, East Ninth Street, Broadway, and East Eighth Street contains three apartment buildings. The buildings at each end of the block are similar in appearance; each is 6 stories, clad in brick, and massed with an H-plan with large light courts. The 202,000-square-foot apartment building in the middle of the block (at 40 East Ninth Street) consists of a 13-story (138-foot-tall) tower set back from East Eighth Street behind a one-story retail wing.

VIEW CORRIDORS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

The University Village and Washington Square Village residential buildings are visible from multiple locations in the 400-foot study area due to the large size of the two superblocks composing the Proposed Development Area and the heights of the buildings. Due to the low height of the grocery store and Coles building on the South Block of the Proposed Development Area, those buildings are only visible in their immediate vicinities. Similarly, the retail building on the North Block of the Proposed Development Area is only visible in its immediate vicinity on LaGuardia Place, and the playground on the North Block is only visible in its immediate



View north on Greene Street to West Houston Street **72**



View north on Wooster Street to West Houston Street **73**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-41



View north on West Broadway to West Houston Street **74**



View north in Washington Square Park toward Fifth Avenue **75**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-42



View northwest on East 8th Street from University Place **76**



View north on University Place from Waverly Place **77**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-43

vicinity on Mercer Street. In addition, there are no east-west view corridors to the retail building and playground on the North Block.

Individual towers of the University Village complex are partially visible in the northward view corridors along West Broadway, Wooster Street, and Greene Street from south of West Houston Street (see **Figure 8-41** and view 74 of **Figure 8-42**). The visibility of the towers differs between the view corridors, with the towers appearing in the background beyond intervening low-rise loft buildings that line the view corridors. West Broadway provides the most obscured view. The view corridors on West Broadway, and Wooster, Greene, and Mercer Streets also provide limited views of the Washington Square Village south building on Bleecker Street. West Houston Street provides clear views to the University Village complex from west of LaGuardia Place (see view 78 of **Figure 8-44**); from Broadway and to the east on West Houston Street, the Cable Building blocks views of the University Village complex (see view 79 of **Figure 8-44**). From Broadway, the upper floors of Silver Tower I are visible in views west on Bleecker Street (see view 80 of **Figure 8-45**). From Washington Square, only the uppermost portions of one or two of the University Village towers are visible in the background beyond the NYU Kimmel Center, Bobst Library, and the Washington Square Village residential buildings (see view 81 of **Figure 8-45**). The Washington Square Village residential buildings are partially visible, as mentioned above, in certain northward views from south of Houston Street (see **Figure 8-41**). These buildings are also visible on West Houston Street, especially in the vicinity of Mercer Street, from the east and west along Bleecker and West 3rd Streets, and in views south on Mercer Street and from Washington Square Park (see **Figures 8-46** and **8-47**). The visibility of these buildings varies due to intervening buildings.

As defined in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, "a visual resource is the connection from the public realm to significant natural or built features, including views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings or groups of buildings, or natural resources (p. 10-1)." Visual resources in the 400-foot study area include the University Village towers (the complex is a New York City Landmark), Washington Square and the vistas from within it, Washington Square Arch (which is located in the ¼-mile study area described below), the 1 Fifth Avenue apartment building, the Cable Building, and Grace Episcopal Church at Broadway and East 10th Street (which is located in the ¼-mile study area). The three towers of the University Village complex are visible from numerous locations within the 400-foot study area as described above. The important vantage points for views of the University Village towers are the immediately adjacent blocks that provide unobstructed views and the blocks of West Houston Street to the west of LaGuardia Place. Washington Square is most visible in its immediate vicinity, but it provides an open green space in the middle of a densely developed area, which affords expansive views in all directions of a wide variety of historic and modern buildings of various styles, heights, and bulk (see view 75 of **Figure 8-42** and view 81 of **Figure 8-46**). In addition, views west on Washington Place and views north on LaGuardia Place and Thompson Street have the park at their focal point. Although the Washington Square Arch is located just outside of the 400-foot study area it is visible from within it. The Roman-style triumphal arch is located at the northern edge of Washington Square, at the southern terminus of Fifth Avenue. It is visible from most locations within the park and the streets that border the park, and is also visible in northward views on Thompson Street (see view 51 of **Figure 8-30**). The tall apartment building at 1 Fifth Avenue is visible from numerous locations within the study area; it is clearly visible from within Washington Square Park in the background of the arch and from the streets bordering the park, in views north along West Broadway, LaGuardia Place, and Thompson Street, and in views west along East Eighth Street (see view 49 of **Figure 8-29**, view 51 of **Figure 8-30**, and view 75 of



View northeast on West Houston Street from Sullivan Street **78**



View west on Houston Street from Crosby Street **79**

Urban Design and Visual Resources

400-Foot Study Area

Figure 8-44



View southwest on Bleecker Street from Broadway **80**



View south in Washington Square Park from Washington Arch **81**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-45



View northeast on Bleecker Street from Thompson Street **82**



View northwest on Bleecker Street from Broadway **83**

Urban Design and Visual Resources

400-Foot Study Area

Figure 8-46



View southeast on West 3rd Street from Sullivan Street **84**



View southwest on West 3rd Street from Broadway **85**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
400-Foot Study Area
Figure 8-47

Figure 8-42). The Cable Building is a visual resource in views on East and West Houston Street. Although Grace Episcopal Church is located in the ¼-mile study area, its tall Gothic spire is visible in long, northward views on Broadway from within the 400-foot study area (see view 65 of **Figure 8-37**). Additional visual resources located outside the study area but visible from within it are the Woolworth Building, which can be seen in southward views on Broadway, and the Empire State Building, which can be seen in northward views on West Broadway.

¼-MILE STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

The ¼-mile study area includes the remainder of Washington Square Park and more of the Greenwich Village, SoHo, and NoHo neighborhoods, and the historic districts corresponding to portions of those neighborhoods. It also includes the area around Astor Place and The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (The Cooper Union), the westernmost edge of the East Village, and part of the southern portion of the Union Square area.

In addition to Houston Street and Broadway, major streets in the ¼-mile study area are Sixth Avenue, a four-lane northbound road, the Bowery/Fourth Avenue, which has two northbound and two southbound lanes divided by a median south of Astor Place and three lanes of northbound traffic north of East Ninth Street. Like the 400-foot study area, the ¼-mile study area is mostly developed in a grid, although block shapes and sizes vary. In addition, the following streets cut through the grid at diagonals: Sixth Avenue, the Bowery/Fourth Avenue, portions of Houston Street, and the portion of Broadway north of East 10th Street. In general, the ¼-mile study area is densely developed with low- to mid-rise store, loft, institutional, and residential buildings south of Houston Street and in the areas south, west, and north of Washington Square Park, and a mix of low- to high-rise residential, commercial, and institutional buildings in the northern and eastern portions of the ¼-mile study area. Ground-floor retail is common throughout the ¼-mile study area and street furniture is typical for a mixed-use Manhattan neighborhood and similar to that found in the 400-foot study area.

As in the 400-foot study area, the blocks south of Houston Street are lined by low- to mid-rise loft and store buildings, along with some row houses, apartment buildings, and religious buildings. These buildings tend to be located on narrow lots, built to the streetwall, and designed in historical period styles. Ground-floor retail spaces are common throughout the ¼-mile study area.

The blocks south and west of Washington Square Park are largely developed with tenements and row-houses, along with taller apartment buildings and religious buildings, like buildings found on the blocks of LaGuardia Place and Thompson, Bleecker, and West 3rd Streets in the 400-foot study area. Immediately south of Washington Square Park, the two blocks bounded by Washington Square South and Thompson, MacDougal, and West 3rd Streets contain Judson Memorial Church and several NYU academic buildings. The Judson Memorial Church, NYU King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, NYU Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, and NYU Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies occupy the northern half of the block between Thompson and Sullivan Streets, and the NYU Furman Hall building occupies the southern half of the block. The Judson Memorial Church is a 50-foot-tall Italian Renaissance-style building clad in brick and stone with a gabled roof, arched stained glass windows, an arched entrance porch, and an adjacent 105-foot-tall bell tower. The King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center occupies three distinct but internally integrated buildings—the 70-foot-tall Italian

Renaissance-style former Judson Hall, a 5-story brick and brownstone former boarding house designed in an Italianate style with a bracketed cornice, and a four-story modernist granite building. Furman Hall is a modern 120-foot-tall brick building with a three-story section on Thompson Street and a four-story section on West 3rd Street. The main portion of the building is a tall rectangular block with a prominent barrel vaulted roof. The NYU Law Center (Vanderbilt Hall) occupies the full block between Washington Square South and Sullivan, West 3rd, and MacDougal Streets. It is a five-story (70-foot-tall) Colonial Revival-style building with an H plan enclosing a large courtyard on Washington Square South. There is also a court on West 3rd Street, but it is located on the roof of a one-story portion of the building.

Fifth Avenue, which begins at Washington Square Park, is mostly lined by tall apartment buildings. There are also two churches, a row house, and a mid-rise apartment building. A 469,000-square foot 20-story (189-foot-tall) apartment building occupies most of the west side of Fifth Avenue between Washington Square North and West Eighth Street, across from the apartment building at 1 Fifth Avenue and Washington Mews. Set back from Washington Square North behind a 5-story brick apartment building, the 20-story building has a modified H plan with a landscaped, vehicular drop-off on Fifth Avenue. It is clad in brick with upper floor setbacks and projecting balconies. The other tall apartment buildings tend to be 15 stories (approximately 150 feet tall), clad in brick with Classical-style stone ornamentation, and massed with facades that rise flush for all or most of their full heights. A few have ground-floor retail spaces. The apartment at the northeast corner of East Ninth Street is set back from the street behind a landscaped vehicular drop-off and is massed with upper floor setbacks and recessed balconies. The blocks immediately east and west of Fifth Avenue largely contain row houses.

University Place is lined by a mix of low- and mid-rise commercial and residential buildings on lots of varying size. These buildings are clad in brick and stone, some with ornamentation, and are located on the street with facades that rise without setbacks. The blocks between University Place and Broadway primarily contain brick and stone loft buildings of 7 to 10 stories and slightly shorter brick apartment buildings.

Like the portion in the 400-foot study area, the sections of Broadway within the ¼-mile study area contain a mix of low- to mid-rise tenements and store and loft buildings that are clad in brick, stone, and cast iron and are designed in historical period styles and heavily ornamented. The east side of Broadway between East 11th and East Eighth Streets contains some notable buildings. The Grace Church Complex—consisting of a church and rectory and additional attached buildings—occupies the southern end of the block bounded by Broadway, East 12th Street, Fourth Avenue, and East 10th Street. The Gothic-style church and rectory front on Broadway and are set within landscaped yards enclosed by a decorative metal fence. To the south of the Grace Church Complex is the large Stewart House apartment building. This 651,000-square-foot 21-story (209-foot-tall) brick building occupies a full block and has an H-shaped footprint. Within the courtyards formed by the H plan, there are a vehicular drop-off and landscaped area on East 10th Street and a landscaped yard enclosed with a tall brick wall capped by a metal fence on East Ninth Street. The building is massed with setbacks and vertical recesses and it has corner balconies. The former Wannamaker Department Store occupies the full block to the south of the Stewart House. This 940,000-square-foot 14-story (220-foot-tall) commercial building has a square footprint with facades located at the lot lines that rise for their full height without setbacks. The former department store is clad in stone and ornamented with double-height arched openings that circle the base, arched windows at the attic story, and a projecting cornice.

VIEW CORRIDORS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

There is no visual relationship between the Proposed Development Area and most of the ¼-mile study area. Due to distance, the street plan, and intervening buildings, the University Village towers and Washington Square Village residential buildings are not visible from most locations and there are no east-west view corridors to the Washington Square Village retail building and playground. The clearest views of the University Village towers are from West Houston Street, and they are visible from as far west as Sixth Avenue (see view 86 of **Figure 8-48**). As mentioned above, the University Village towers are not visible from East Houston Street within the 400-foot study area (see view 79 of **Figure 8-45**). Around Elizabeth Street within the ¼-mile study area, the upper floors begin to be visible over intervening buildings (see view 87 of **Figure 8-48**). There are less obstructed views from East Houston Street at the Bowery, but from points farther east of the Bowery, intervening buildings begin again to obscure their prominence (see **Figure 8-49**). North of Houston Street, there are no views of the University Village towers from the east or west portions of the ¼-mile study area. From south of West Houston Street, the University Village towers are not visible in views on Mercer Street, but they are partially visible in views on Greene Street, Wooster Street, and West Broadway though they are seen as background buildings in the context of other buildings (see **Figures 8-50 and 8-51** and view 93 of **Figure 8-52**). Views on West Broadway to these buildings are generally obscured. From Washington Square Park and Fifth Avenue, there are some limited views of the uppermost portions of 505 LaGuardia Place and Silver Tower I beyond intervening buildings (see view 81 of **Figure 8-46**, view 94 of **Figure 8-52**, and **Figure 8-53**). In views south on University Place, some extremely limited views of the topmost floors of 505 LaGuardia Place are available (see view 97 of **Figure 8-54**).

Due to their shorter height, the Washington Square Village residential buildings are less visible within the ¼-mile study area than the University Village towers. On Bleecker Street, the southern building can be partially seen from Sixth Avenue (see view 98 of **Figure 8-54**). In contrast, the northern building can not be seen in eastward views on West 3rd Street from Sixth Avenue (see view 99 of **Figure 8-55**). From the east, the Washington Square Village residential buildings have limited or no visibility due to intervening buildings and their position set back from the street. On West Houston Street, the southern building becomes visible in eastward views from west of Sixth Avenue due to the angle of Houston Street (see view 100 of **Figure 8-55**). From south of Houston Street, the southern residential building is the focal point of northward views on Greene and Wooster Streets, but it is not visible in northward views on Mercer Street or West Broadway (see **Figure 8-51**). From the northern portion of the ¼-mile study area, there are some limited southward views of the northern building from within Washington Square Park, the southernmost portion of Fifth Avenue, and along University Place (see view 94 of **Figure 8-52**, view 95 of **Figure 8-53**, and view 97 of **Figure 8-54**). In views on University Place, the north Washington Square Village residential building is part of the focal point of the view corridor, but those views also include Bobst Library, 505 LaGuardia Place, and the brick Art Deco Long Distance Building of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company at Sixth Avenue and Lispenard Street, which is well south of the study area. The latter building is surmounted by tall antennas that are visible in the University Place view corridor.

The ¼-mile study area includes numerous visual resources, but the only visual resource that has a visual relationship with the Proposed Development Area is Washington Square Park; as described above, there are some limited views of the University Village towers and Washington Square Village residential buildings from within the park.



View east on West Houston Street from Sixth Avenue **86**



View west on East Houston Street from Elizabeth Street **87**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
1/4-Mile Study Area
Figure 8-48



View west on East Houston Street from the Bowery **88**



View west on East Houston Street from Second Avenue **89**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
1/4-Mile Study Area
Figure 8-49



View north on Mercer Street from Spring Street **90**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
1/4-Mile Study Area
Figure 8-50



View north on Greene Street from Spring Street **91**



View north on Wooster Street from Spring Street **92**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
1/4-Mile Study Area
Figure 8-51



View north on West Broadway from Spring Street **93**



View southeast from north side of Washington Square Park **94**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
1/4-Mile Study Area
Figure 8-52



View south on Fifth Avenue from vicinity of Washington Mews **95**



View south on Fifth Avenue from 10th Street **96**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
1/4-Mile Study Area
Figure 8-53



View south on University Place from East 11th Street **97**

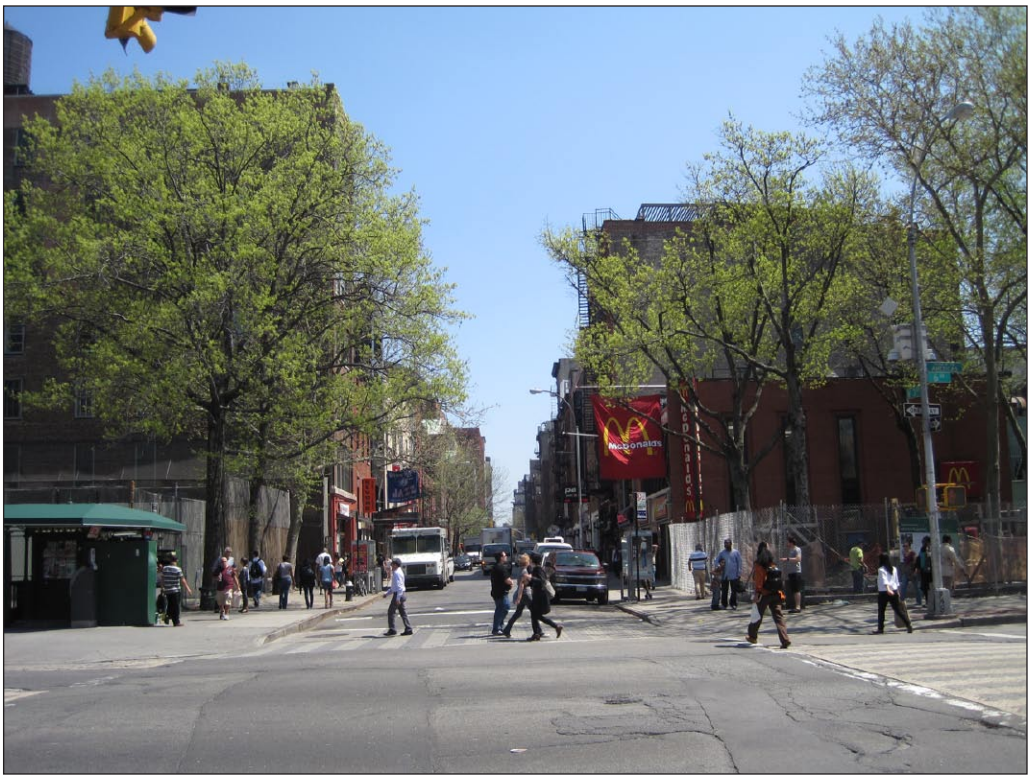


View east on Bleecker Street from Sixth Avenue **98**

Urban Design and Visual Resources

1/4-Mile Study Area

Figure 8-54



View east on West 3rd Street from Sixth Avenue **99**



View east on West Houston Street from Varick Street **100**

Urban Design and Visual Resources
1/4-Mile Study Area
Figure 8-55

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

2021 PHASE 1

In the future without the Proposed Actions, there are projects planned or under construction within the Proposed Development Area, the Commercial Overlay Area, and the two study areas by the interim 2021 analysis year. These projects and their potential effects on urban design and visual resources are discussed below.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

By 2021, Adrienne's Garden, a 4,500-square-foot playground will be built on the LaGuardia Place Street between Bleecker and West 3rd Streets. This project will affect the streetscape and pedestrian experience on the North Block by replacing a portion of the ornamental LaGuardia Place Gardens with an active open space containing playground equipment enclosed with a tall metal fence.

Some renovations may also be made to the playground on the South Block located east of the Coles building in the Mercer Street Strip between West Houston and Bleecker Streets. It is not expected that this project will substantially affect the streetscape of the South Block as the playground would likely remain enclosed with a metal fence and planted with trees.

COMMERCIAL OVERLAY AREA

It is expected that by 2021 in the Commercial Overlay Area NYU will develop new academic uses at 25 West 4th Street and 15 Washington Place. The existing 6-story 74,786-square-foot brick and stone loft building at 25 West 4th Street will be enlarged with 20,000 square feet of academic uses, which will add approximately two stories to the building. The existing 6-story 69,000-square-foot brick residential building at 15 Washington Place would be converted into an academic building and enlarged to 129,000 square feet with approximately six additional floors. These two projects will increase the density of the Commercial Overlay Area with uses that are compatible to the existing predominant uses in the area and will not affect the pedestrian experience in the Commercial Overlay Area.

MERCER PLAZA AREA

The Mercer Plaza Area is not expected to be altered in the future without the Proposed Actions. The underground cogeneration plant that was completed in 2010 will continue to provide reliable, low-emission power for the NYU campus. Mercer Plaza—the public plaza created by the University and opened in 2010—will continue to serve both NYU and non-NYU populations.

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

Without the Proposed Actions, it is anticipated that NYU will develop two new buildings and will change the use of existing buildings in the study area by 2021. NYU will replace the existing 1- to 3-story film center building at 36 East Eighth Street with a new 134,000-square-foot academic building. Assuming that the building would be built to the maximum floor area ratio for the site, it could potentially be up to 14 stories tall. NYU's new 6-story Center for Academic and Spiritual Life is currently under construction at 58 Washington Square South (adjacent to the west of the Kimmel Center) and will be completed by 2012. NYU will also

convert three residential buildings at 7, 8, and 14A Washington Mews to academic use. These projects will not substantially change the pedestrian experience in the study area.

Non-NYU developments will also be undertaken by 2021. These include a new 13-story residential and commercial building at 688 Broadway that will be developed on the site of a surface parking lot. A new 7-story residential and commercial building will be constructed at 150 Wooster Street, replacing a surface parking lot. Further, an addition will be made to the building at 138 Wooster Street, which will be converted to residential and commercial uses.

All of these projects will add residential, academic, and commercial uses to an area that is largely defined by such uses and will add to the density of the 400-study area. The new 7-, 13-, and 14-story buildings will be in keeping with the heights of surrounding buildings. The replacement of two surface parking lots with new buildings will have beneficial effects on the streetscape surrounding those sites.

¼-MILE STUDY AREA

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy," there are nine projects proposed for construction by 2012 in the ¼-mile study area. These are residential, commercial, and academic projects. Therefore, they will be in keeping with the predominant uses of the ¼-mile study area. All but one of these projects are located along or east of Broadway, and they will, therefore, increase the density of the eastern and northern portions of the ¼-mile study area.

2031 PHASE 2

By 2031 in the future without the Proposed Actions, there is one known development project in the Proposed Development Area. That project and its potential effects on urban design and visual resources are discussed below. There are no known development projects planned for completion by 2031 in the Commercial Overlay Area or the two project study areas.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

Without the Proposed Actions, it is anticipated that the existing one-story grocery store at the northwest corner of the South Block will be redeveloped by 2031 with an as-of-right approximately 175,000-gsf, 9-story building containing a supermarket and NYU academic space. This building will have an approximately square footprint but will be massed with setbacks on the west (LaGuardia Place) and north (Bleecker Street) facades (see **Figure 8-56**). This building will affect the streetscape and pedestrian experience in the immediate area by replacing a non-descript one-story building with a 9-story building that is expected to be designed with fenestration and a more active ground floor. It would increase the density of the South Block, change southward views into the site by partially obscuring views of the University Village towers, and the void at the center of the complex, from around the intersection of Bleecker Street and LaGuardia Place, and alter views west along Bleecker Street adjacent to the South Block.

Occupying the site of the existing grocery store, this new building will not obscure views north and south on LaGuardia Place or east and west on Bleecker Street. From the north on LaGuardia Place, it will partially obstruct views of 505 LaGuardia Place, but much of that taller building will still be visible to the south of the new building. While the new building will change the setting of the LaGuardia Corner Gardens by erecting a 9-story building on the site of an existing 1-story building, the mostly windowless existing building does not contribute to the setting of

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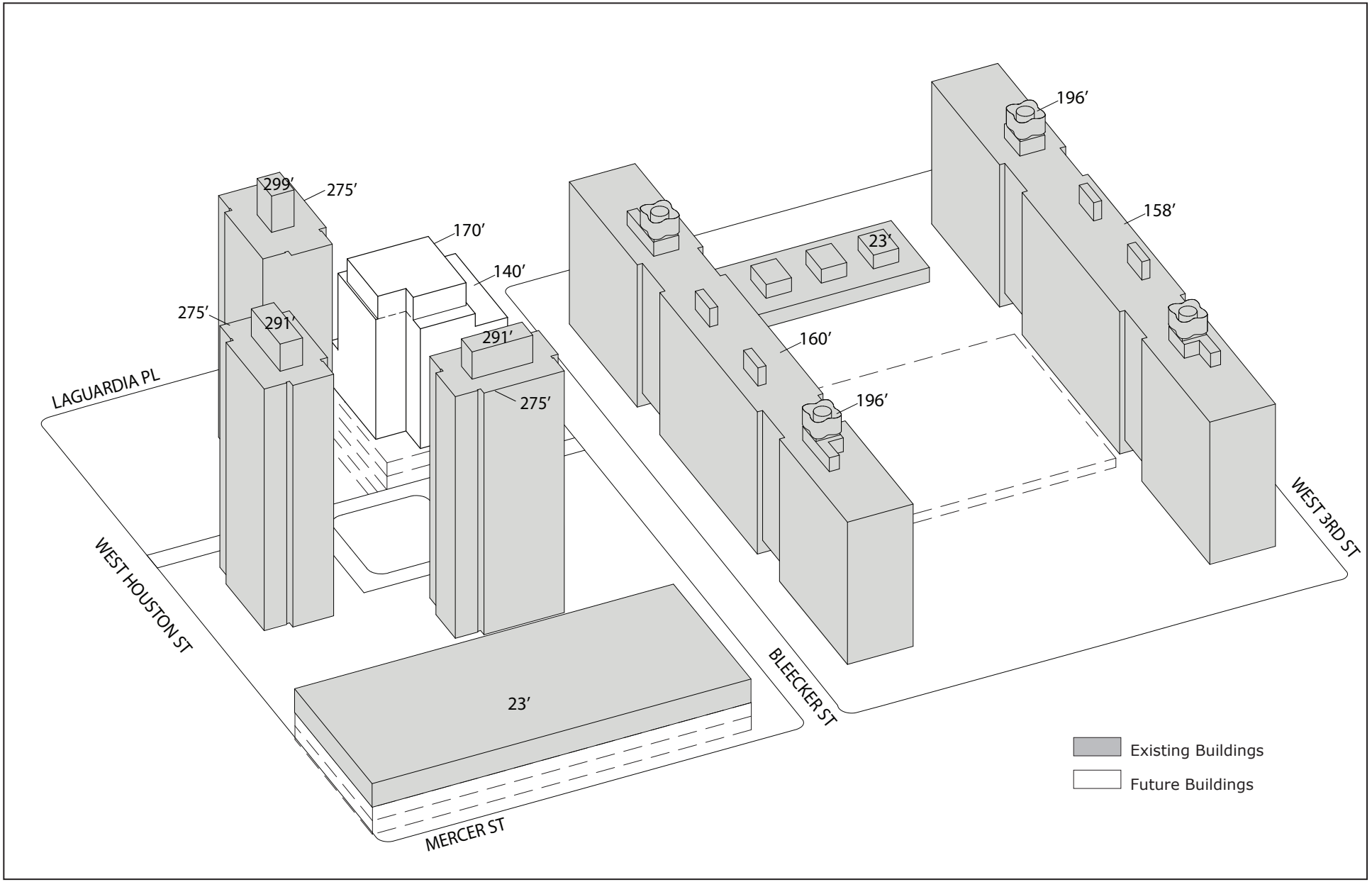

Note: Building form and bulkhead depictions are for illustrative purposes only

NYU Core

Illustrative Axonometric - Future Without the Proposed Actions in 2031
Figure 8-56

the Community Gardens. Further, the west façade of the new building would have setbacks to pull the building back from LaGuardia Place and the adjacent gardens. Nevertheless, as described in Chapter 6, "Shadows," the 9-story building will cast shadows on the Community Gardens during certain hours and seasons.

The height of the building will be in keeping with the heights of existing buildings along LaGuardia Place. At 140 feet tall, this new building will be substantially shorter than the 275-foot-tall University Village towers and approximately 18 feet shorter than the Washington Square Village residential buildings. Although it will be taller than most of the buildings along the west side of LaGuardia Place between West Houston and West 3rd Streets, it will be similar in height to the 143-foot-tall apartment building at the southwest corner of LaGuardia Place and West 3rd Street, similar in height to the 120-foot-tall Kimmel Center, only 40 feet taller than the loft building at 536 LaGuardia Place, and 10 feet shorter than Bobst Library. It will have substantially less square footage than the individual University Village towers and the individual Washington Square Village residential buildings, and it will have less square footage than other nearby NYU academic buildings like the 470,000-square-foot Bobst Library and the 232,000-square-foot Kimmel Center. The supermarket and academic uses will be in keeping with uses in the 400-foot study area.

COMMERCIAL OVERLAY AREA

No development is expected in the absence of the Proposed Actions by 2031 apart from the development by NYU of two sites with academic space that will occur by 2021, as described above.

MERCER PLAZA AREA

As with the 2021 analysis year, no changes are anticipated for the Mercer Plaza Area under the No Action scenario by 2031. The underground cogeneration facility will continue to operate and the public plaza that opened in 2010 will continue to serve both NYU and non-NYU populations.

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

Absent the Proposed Actions, by 2031 residential, commercial, and institutional development is expected to continue to occur in the 400-foot study area. No known No-Action projects are anticipated to be developed in the study area between 2021 and 2031.

¼-MILE STUDY AREA

Absent the Proposed Actions, by 2031 residential, commercial, and institutional development is expected to continue to occur in the ¼-mile study area. No known No-Action projects are anticipated to be developed in the study area between 2021 and 2031.

E. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

The proposed development is described and assessed below. See **Figures 8-57** for illustrative axonometric view of the proposed development in 2021, **Figure 8-58** for an illustrative view of the temporary gymnasium, **Figure 8-59** for an illustrative axonometric view of the proposed development in 2031, **Figure 8-60** for a site plan, Figure 8-61 for an illustrative aerial view, and

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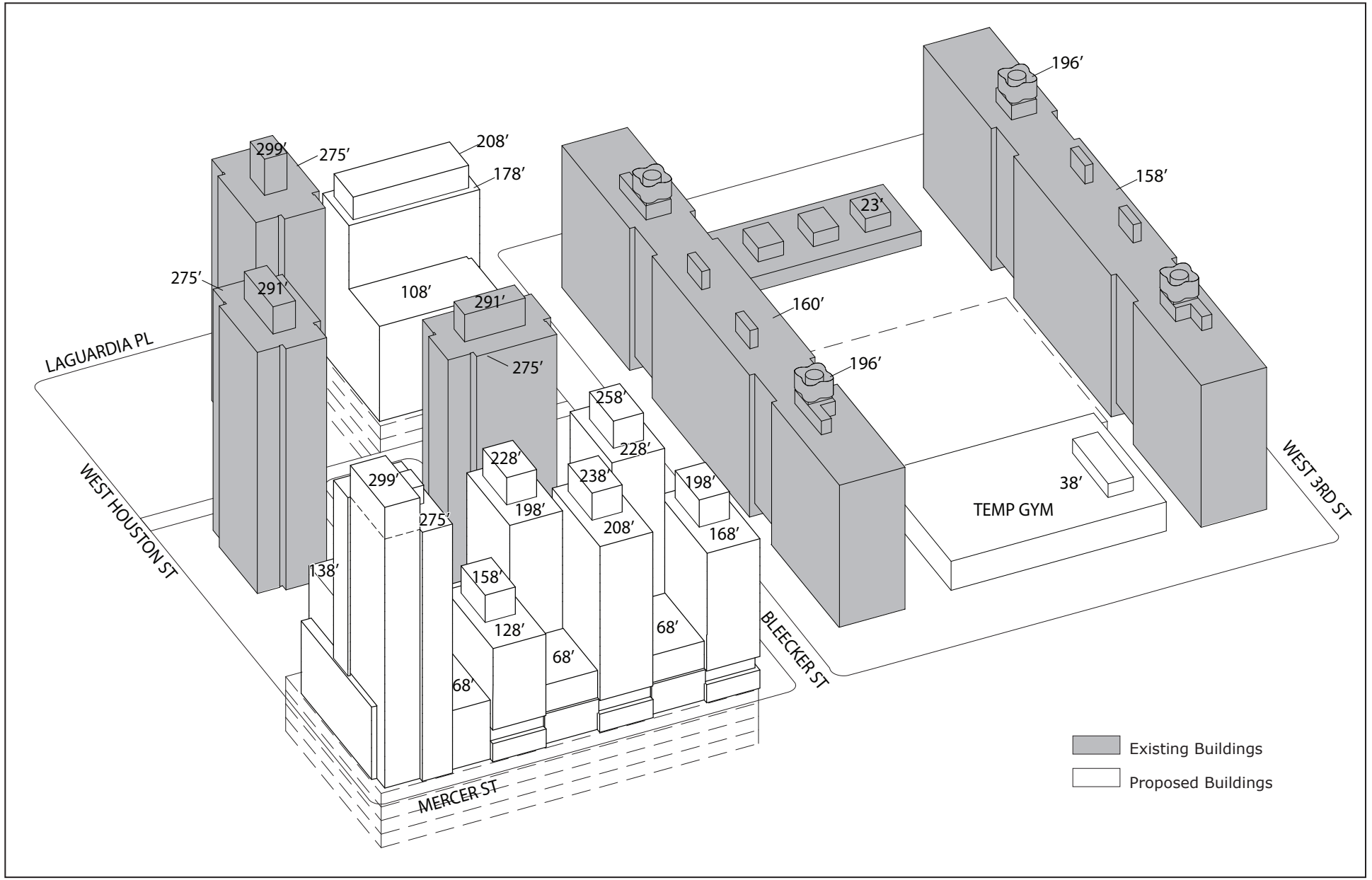
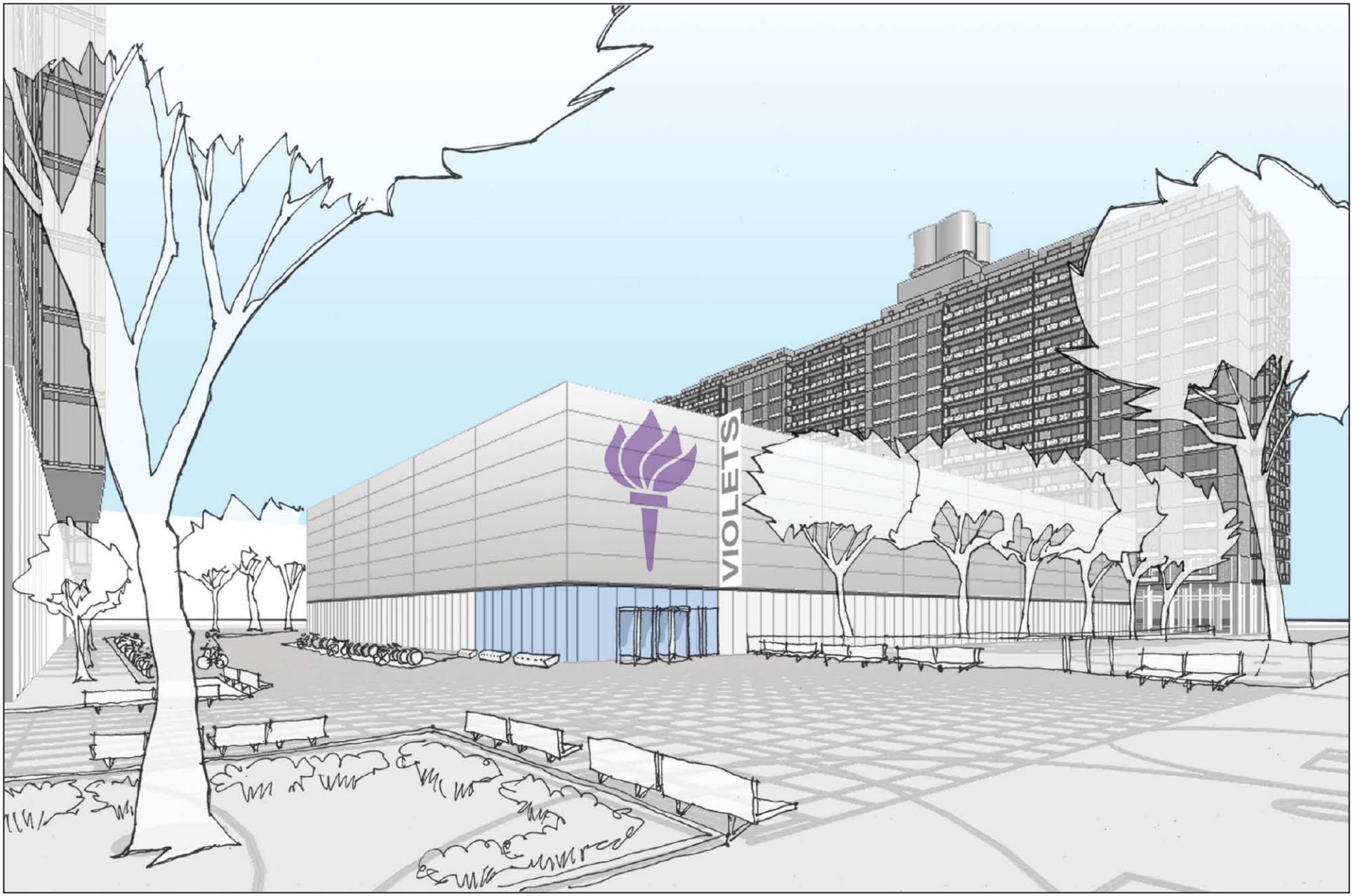


Note: Building form and bulkhead depictions are for illustrative purposes only

Illustrative Axonometric of Proposed Development Area
Future with the Proposed Actions Phase 1 (2021)
Figure 8-57

NYU Core



Illustrative Rendering of Temporary Gymnasium on North Block
View from Mercer Street Looking Northwest

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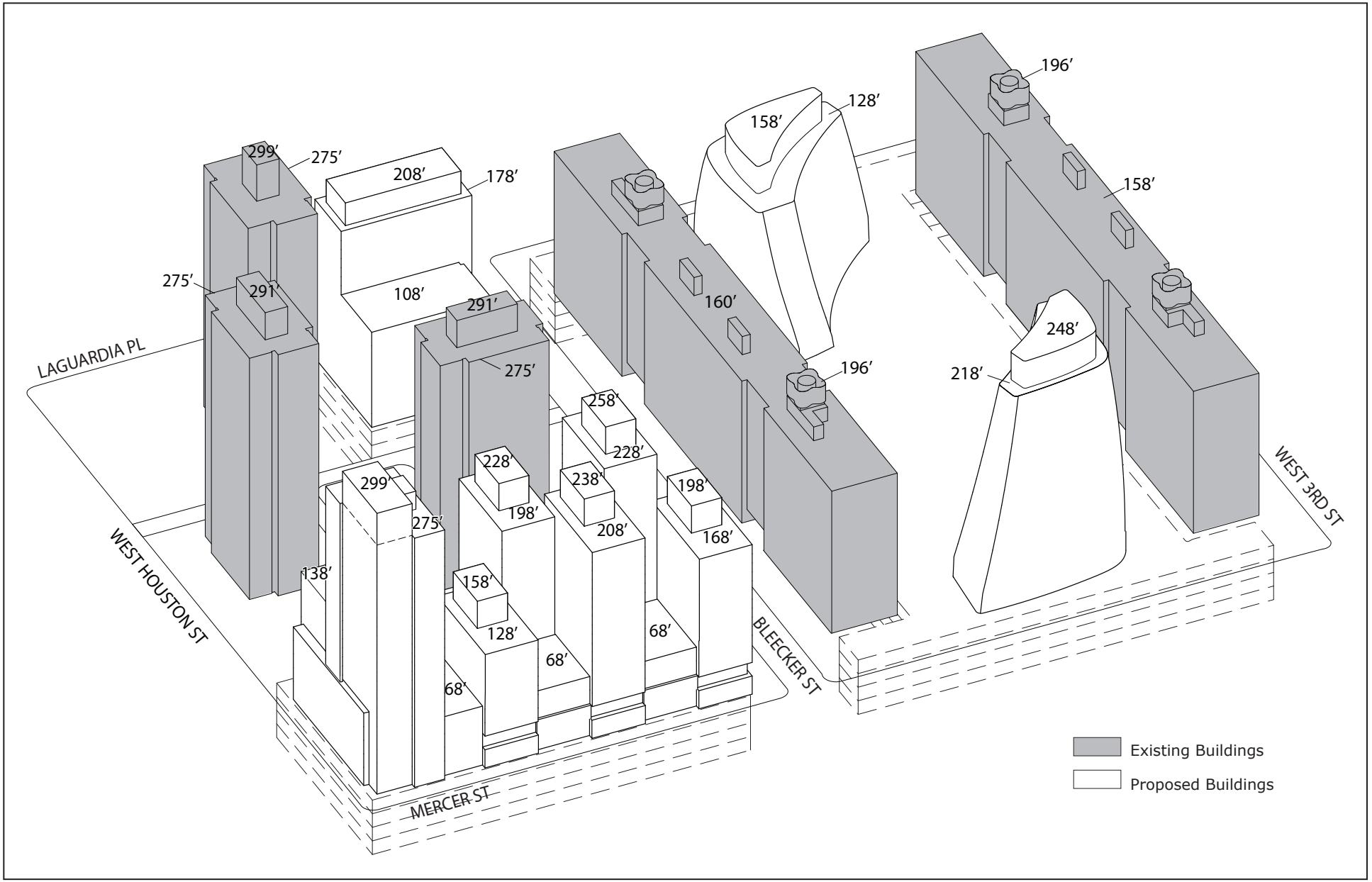

Note: Building form and bulkhead depictions are for illustrative purposes only

Illustrative Axonometric of Proposed Development Area
Future with the Proposed Actions Phase 2 (2031)
Figure 8-59

NYU Core

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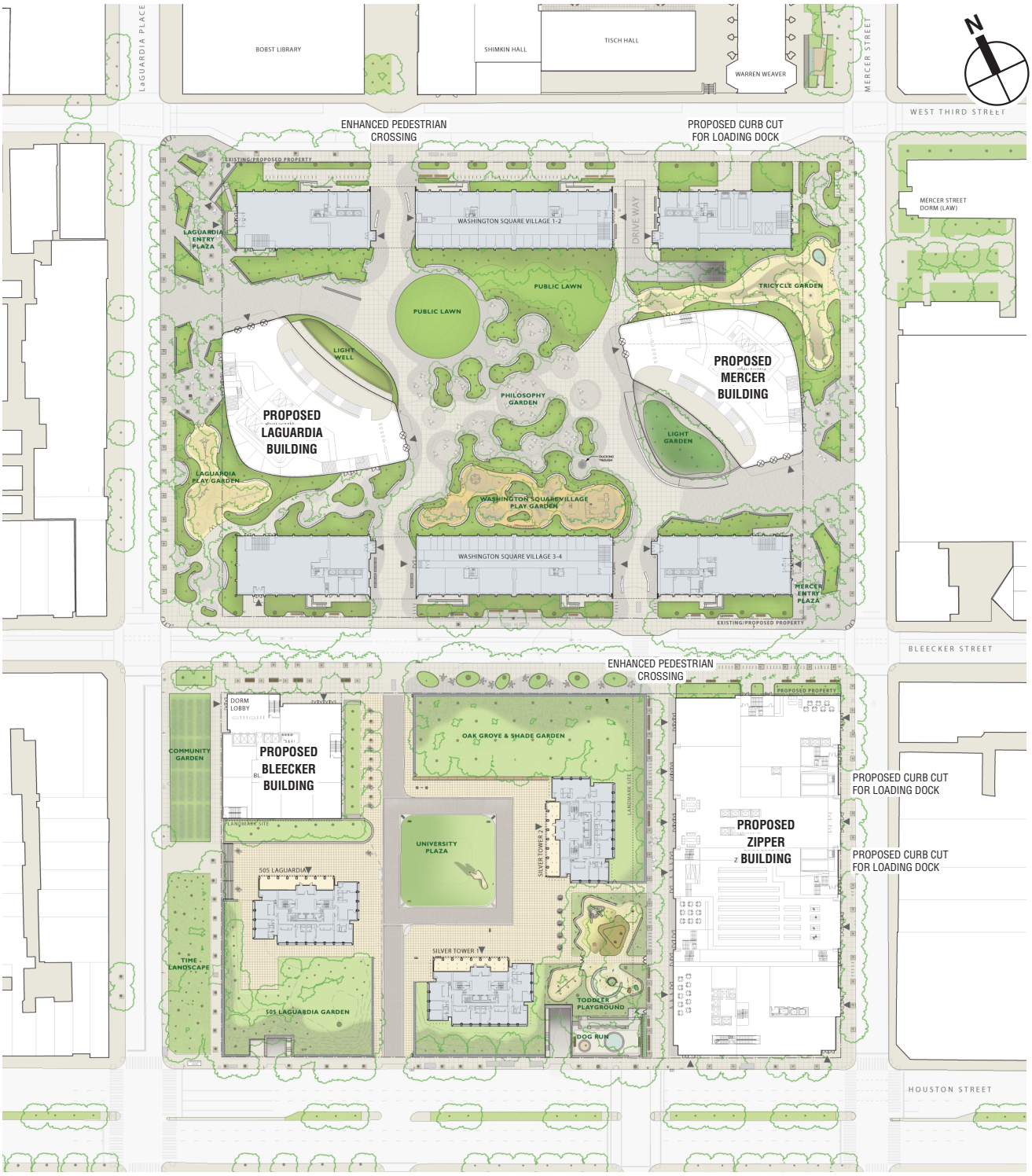


0 64 128 FEET

SCALE

2031 Site Plan for Proposed Development Area

Figure 8-60

12.27.11



Source: NYU

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Aerial View of Proposed Development Area

Figure 8-61

Figures 8-62 to **8-65** for elevations of the proposed development. **Figures 8-66** to **8-91** show No-Action and With-Action views of the proposed development.

2021 PHASE 1

The section below describes the development that would result from the Proposed Actions in the Proposed Development and Commercial Overlay Areas and assesses the potential impacts of the proposed development on the urban design and visual resources of those areas and the two project study areas. In summary, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources and would have beneficial effects on the streetscape and pedestrian experience in the Proposed Development Area, Commercial Overlay Area, and 400-foot study area.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

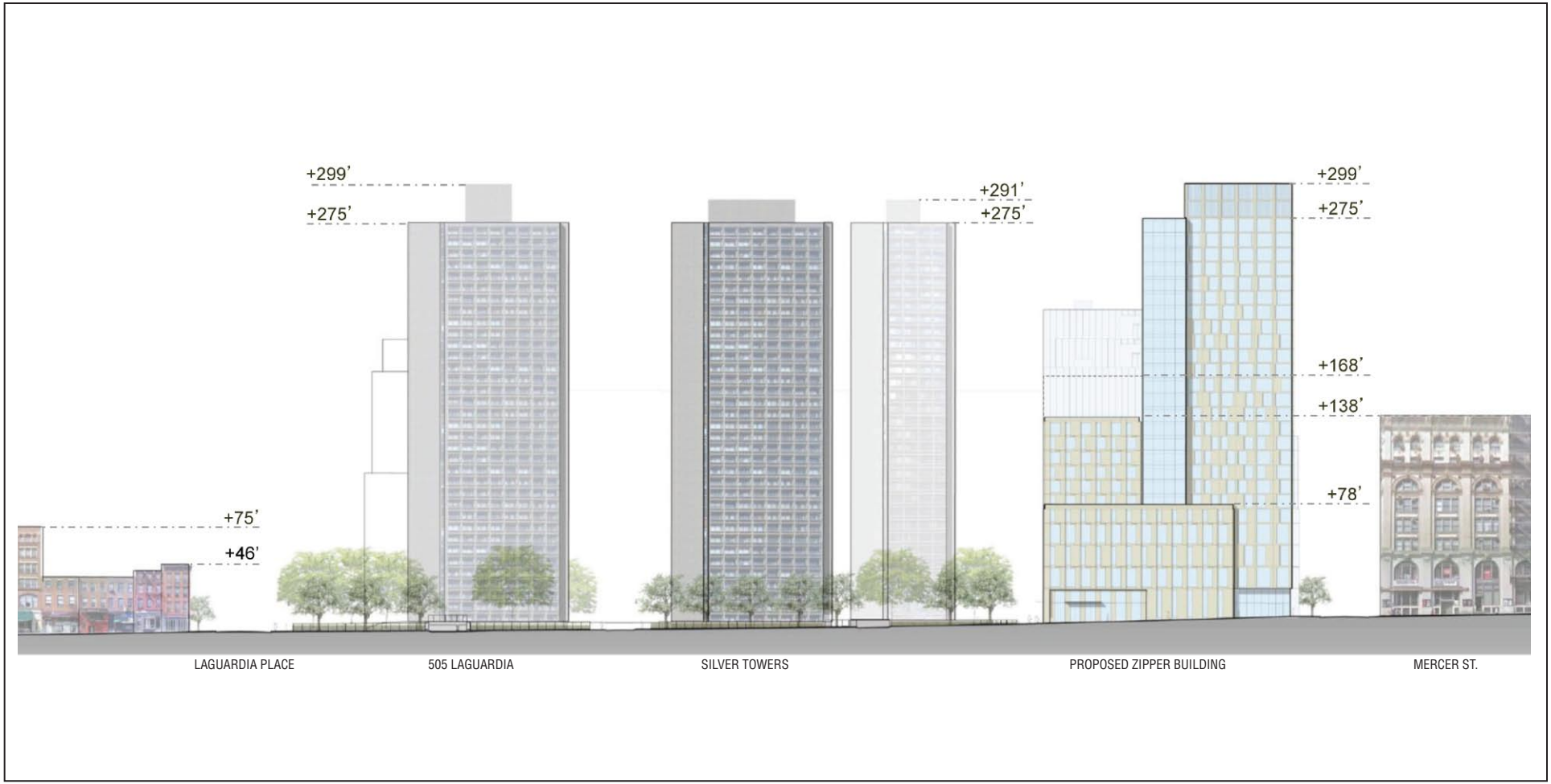
South Block

With the Proposed Actions, the 23-foot-tall Coles building and the one-story grocery store would be demolished, and their sites would be redeveloped with the proposed 4- to 25-story Zipper Building, a widened mid-block walkway west of the Zipper Building, and the proposed 14-story Bleecker Building (see **Figure 8-57**). The Mercer Street Strip would be removed, and landscape changes are proposed for the University Village site as part of this plan. The Proposed Actions would not affect the South Block's existing underground parking.

The approximately 768,100-square-foot (above grade) Zipper Building would occupy a portion of the existing Coles building site and the site of the Mercer Street Strip, extending the building to the Mercer Street sidewalk. The new multi-story building would contain academic space, student and faculty housing, a new athletic center, ground-floor retail, a University-oriented hotel, and academic/conference space. The residential entrance would be on Mercer Street, and there would be commercial entrances on its Mercer and West Houston Street facades. A new South Block open space, similar in size to the Mercer Street Strip, would be created on the west side of the Zipper Building. The building's west façade would face this widened and improved north-south pedestrian walkway connecting Bleecker Street to West Houston Street between the Zipper Building and Silver Tower II. The Zipper Building would also have academic and commercial entrances fronting this walkway, which would be a change to the pedestrian experience in that the Coles building currently presents a mostly blank wall to the existing public walkway.

The Zipper Building would extend for the full Mercer Street blockfront, and it has been designed with two components: a tower at the corner West Houston Street and Mercer Street and a section along Mercer Street that is massed with a series of six narrow, rectangular towers above an 85-foot-tall base. The towers would range in height to the roof parapets from 128 feet to 275 feet (or 158 feet to 299 to the tops of the mechanical bulkheads that would be set back from the floors below).[1] Oriented east-west, the towers would have a staggered arrangement above the base to create light courts fronting on Mercer Street and the pedestrian walkway. These light courts would break up the volume of the building as seen along Mercer Street, as well as on West

[1] The heights of the six towers proceeding from south to north would be 275 (299), 128 (158), 188 (218), 208 (238), 228 (258), and 168 (198) feet. The numbers in parentheses refer to the maximum heights of the mechanical bulkheads that would be up to 30 feet higher than the roof parapets.

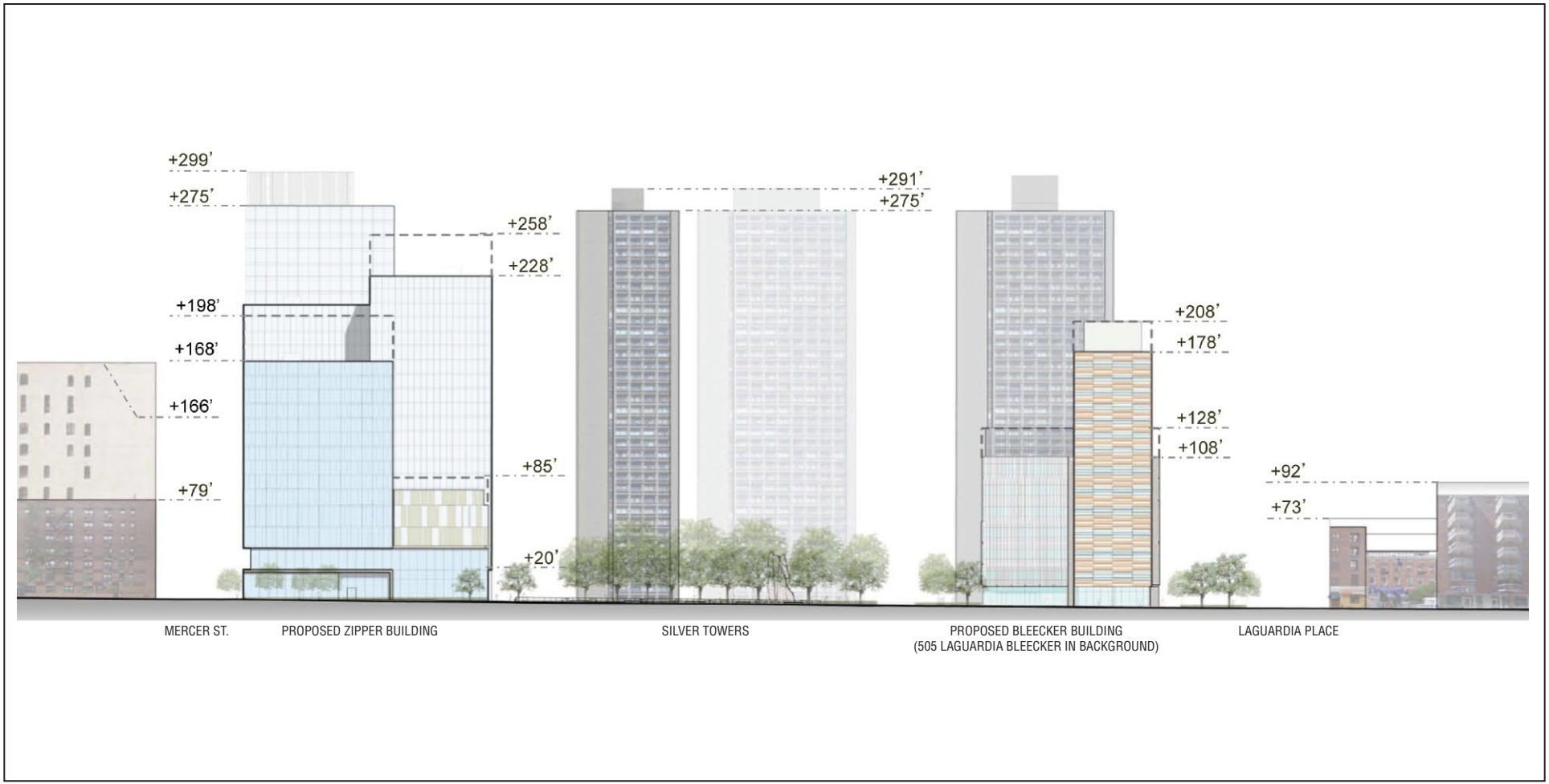


Source: NYU

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

West Houston Street - North Elevation

Figure 8-62

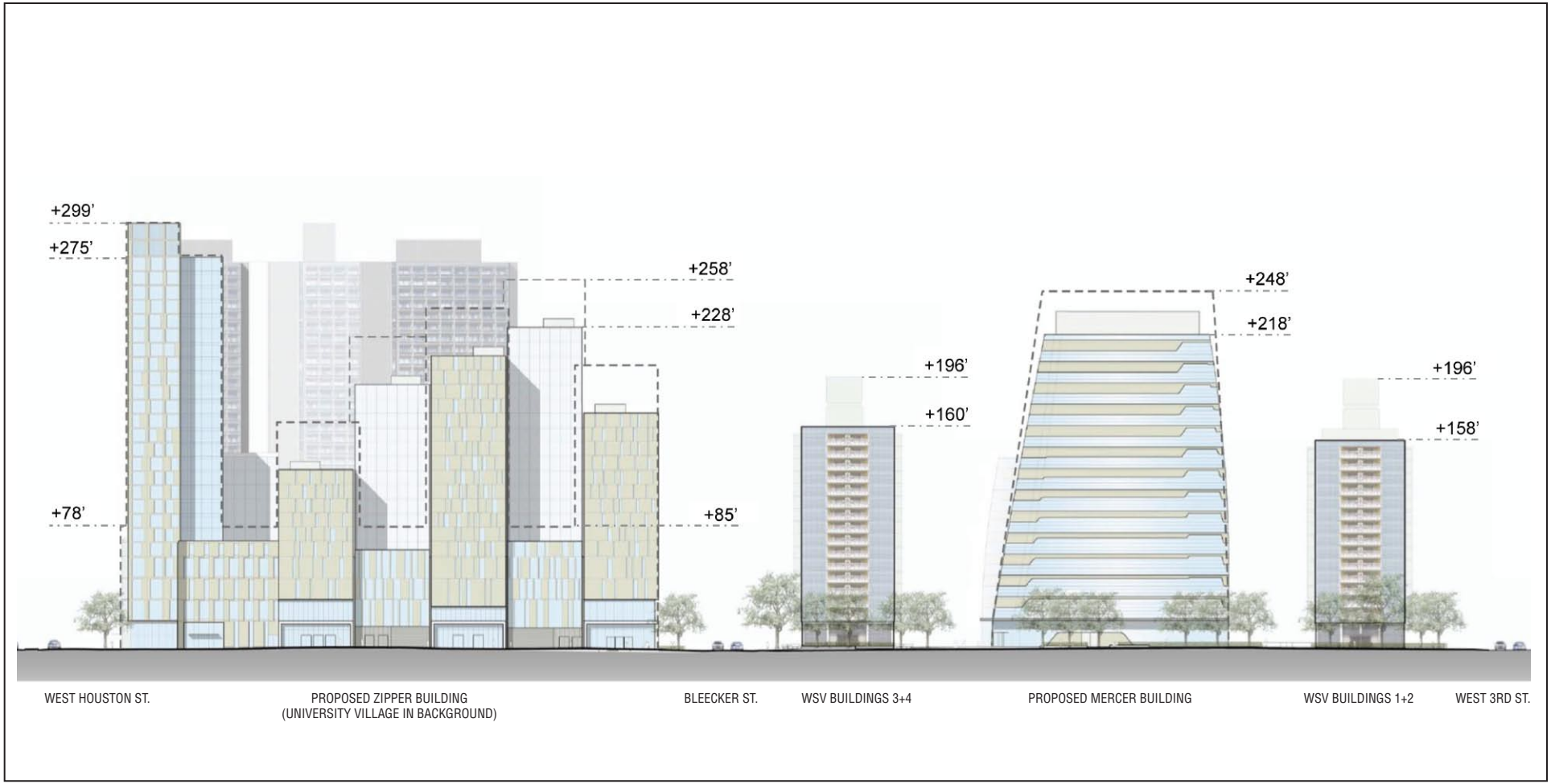


Source: NYU

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Bleecker Street - South Elevation

Figure 8-63

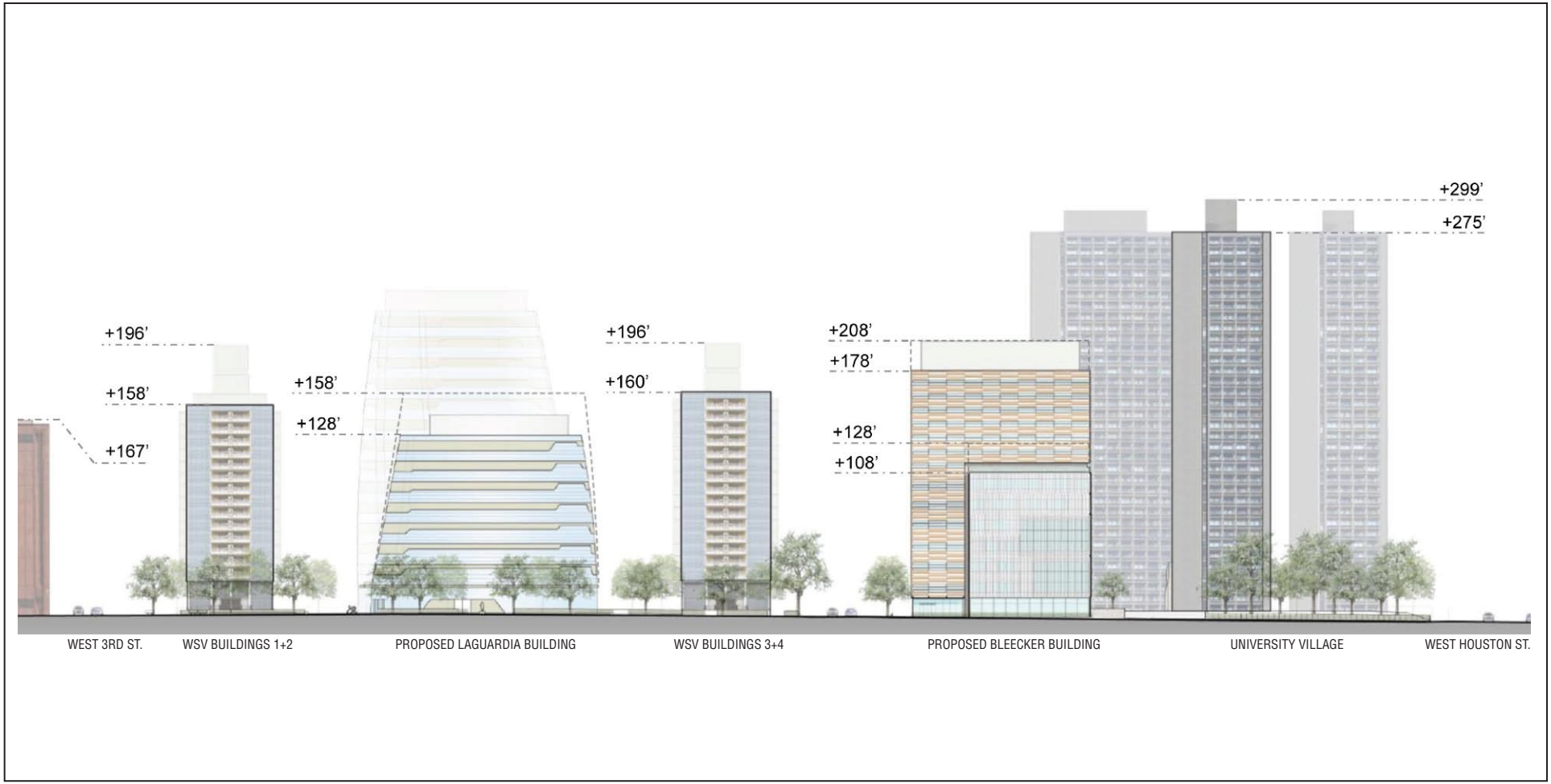


Source: NYU

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Mercer Street - West Elevation

Figure 8-64



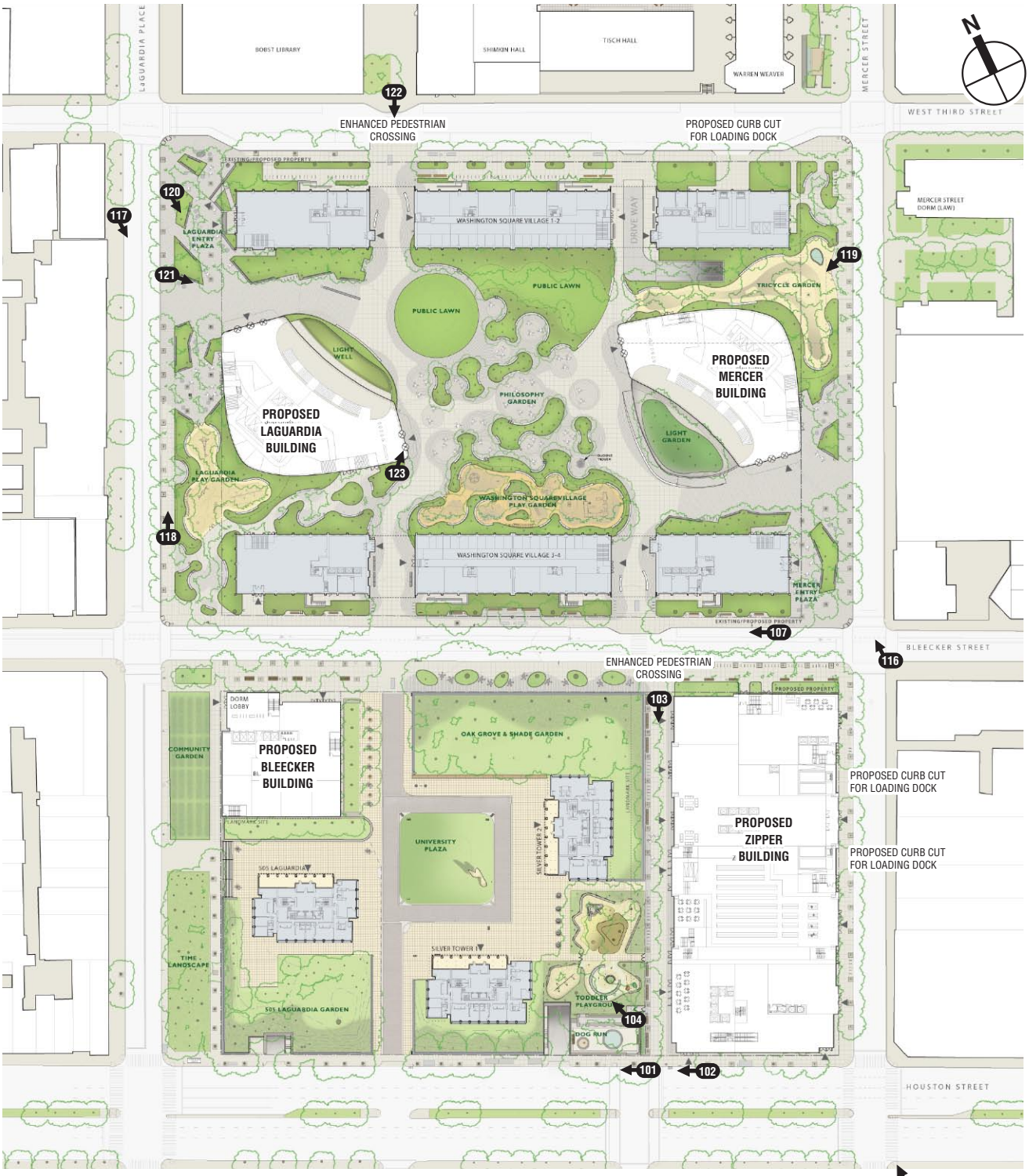
Source: NYU

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

LaGuardia Place - East Elevation

Figure 8-65

12.22.11



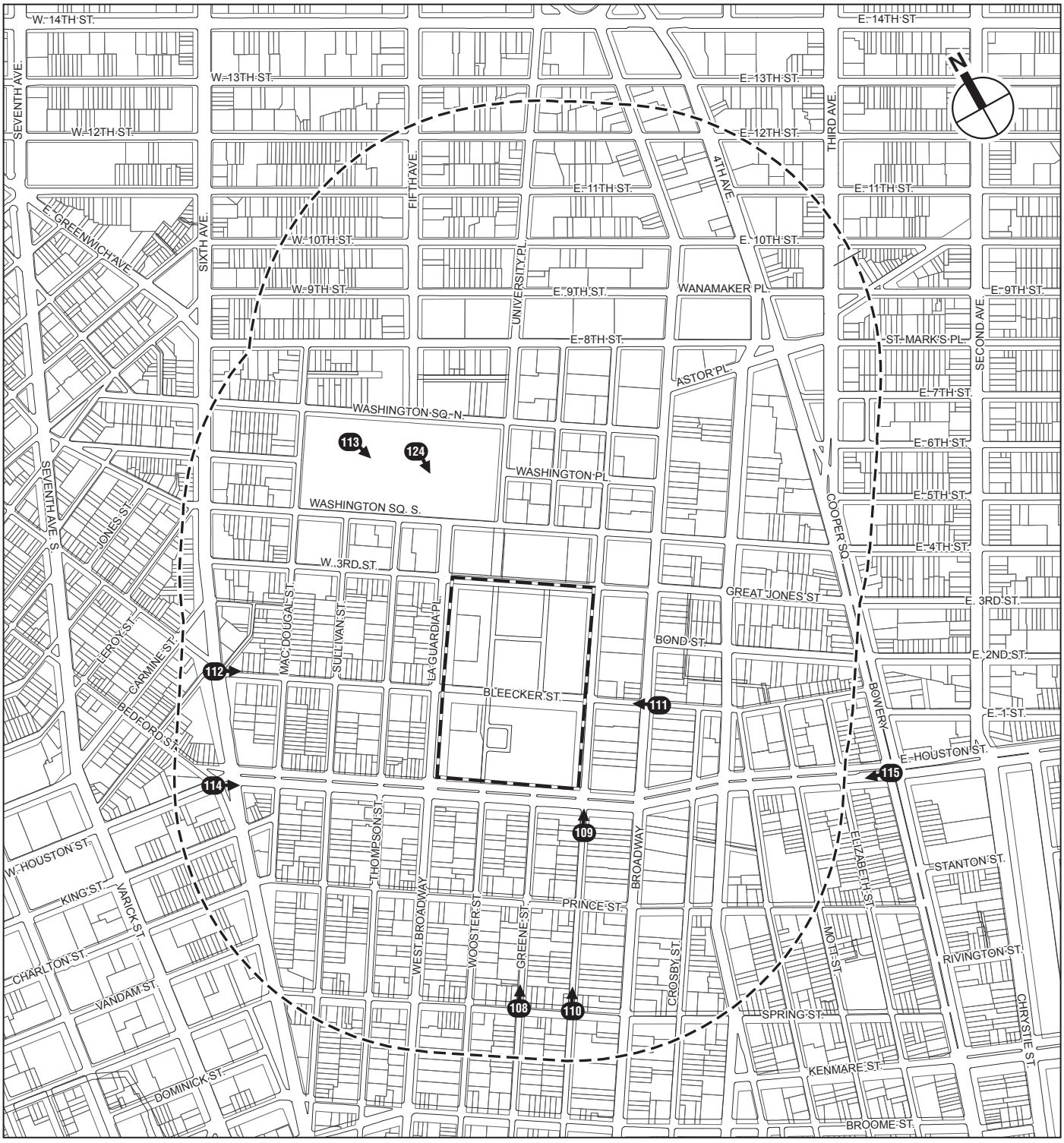
1 *Before and After Views*
Reference Number and Direction

0 64 128 FEET
SCALE

Proposed Development Area
No-Action and With-Action Comparative View Locations
2031 Site Plan for Proposed Development Area
Figure 8-66

NYU Core

12.22.11



Proposed Development Area

Study Area Boundary (1/4-Mile Perimeter)

100 Photo View Direction and Reference Number

Proposed Development Area
No-Action and With-Action Comparative View Locations
Study Area

NYU Core

Figure 8-67



No-Action View **101a**



With-Action Illustrative View **101b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - South Block Houston Street Frontage View West Near Silver Tower I

Figure 8-68



No-Action View **102a**



With-Action Illustrative View **102b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Greene Street Walk View West on Houston Street

Figure 8-69



No-Action View **103a**



With-Action Illustrative View **103b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views -
Greene Street Walk
View South from Bleecker Street

Figure 8-70



No-Action View **104a**



With-Action Illustrative View **104b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views -
South Block Open Space
View Northwest from Greene Street Walk

Figure 8-71



No-Action View **105a**

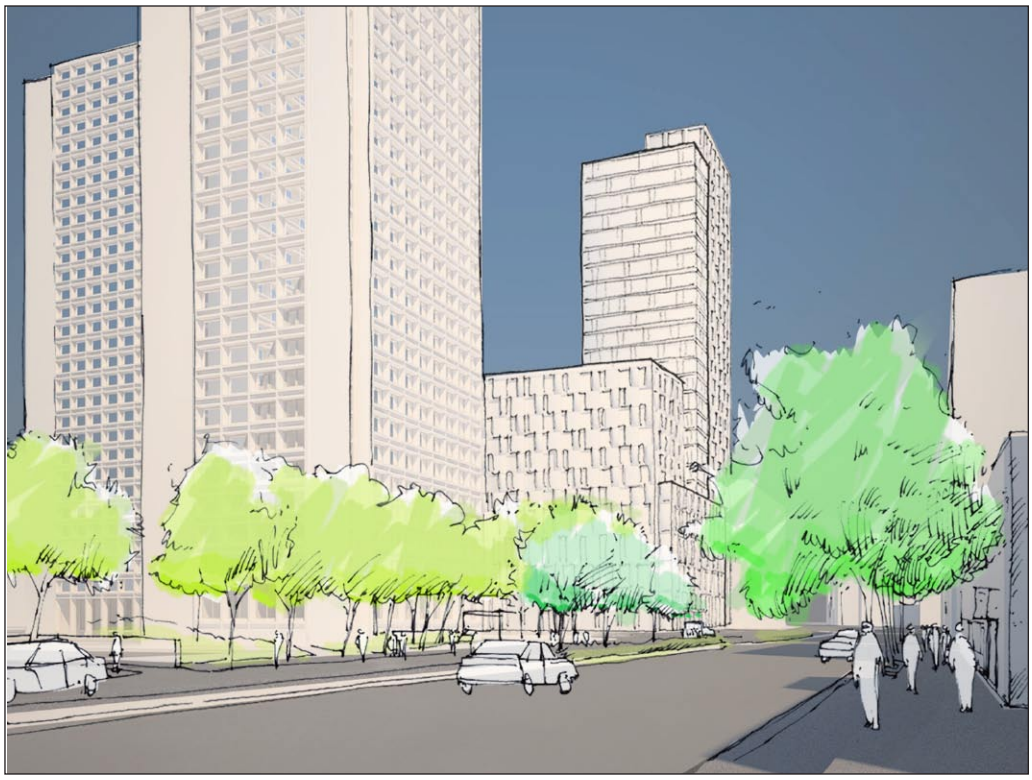


With-Action Illustrative View **105b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views -
Zipper Building Site
View Northwest from Houston and Mercer Streets
Figure 8-72



No-Action View **106a**



With-Action Illustrative View **106b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Before and After Views - Houston Street View East from LaGuardia Place

Figure 8-73



No-Action View **107a**

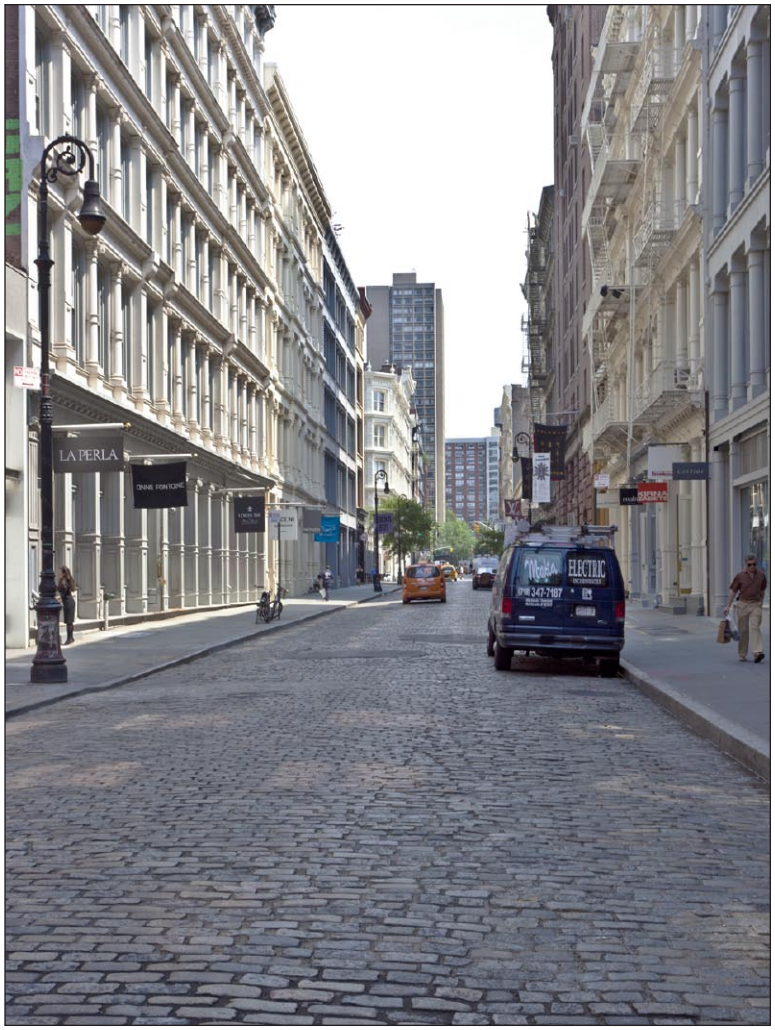


With-Action Illustrative View **107b**

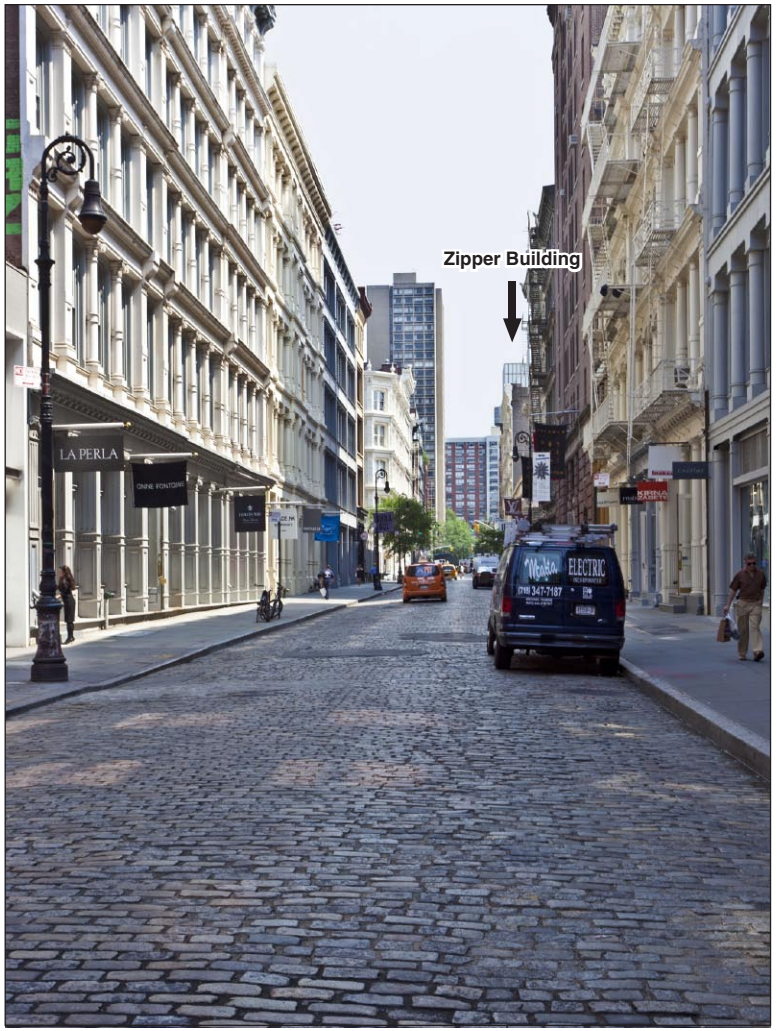
No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views -
Before and After Views - Bleecker Street
View West from Mercer Street

Figure 8-74

12.28.11



No-Action View **108a**



With-Action Illustrative View **108b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Views North on Greene Street from Spring Street

Figure 8-75

12.28.11



No-Action View **109a**



With-Action Illustrative View **109b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Views North on Mercer Street from South of Houston Street

Figure 8-76

12.28.11



No-Action View **110a**



With-Action Illustrative View **110b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Views North on Mercer Street from Spring Street

Figure 8-77

NYU Core

12.28.11



No-Action Illustrative View **111a**



With-Action Illustrative View 111**b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Views West on Bleecker Street from Broadway

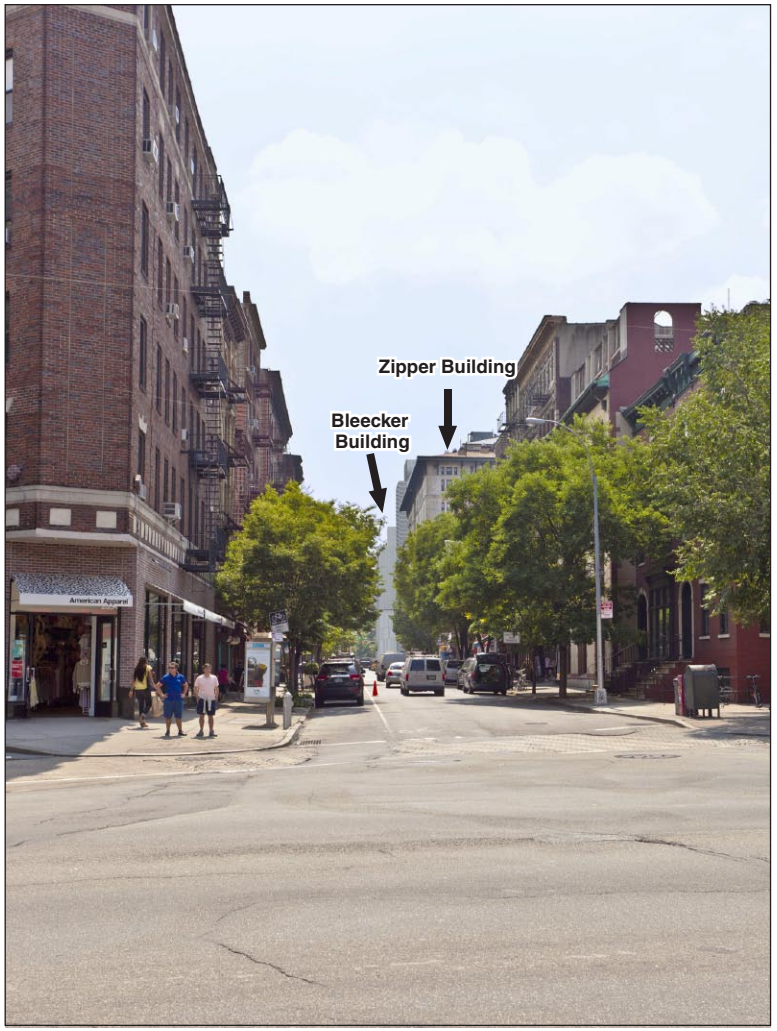
Figure 8-78

NYU Core

12.28.11



No-Action View **112a**



With-Action Illustrative View **112b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Views East on Bleecker Street from Sixth Avenue

Figure 8-79

NYU Core



No-Action View **113a**



With-Action Illustrative View **113b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Views Southeast from North Side of Washington Square Park

Figure 8-80

12.28.11



No-Action Illustrative View **114a**



With-Action Illustrative View **114b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Views East on West Houston Street from Sixth Avenue

Figure 8-81

NYU Core



No-Action View **115a**



With-Action Illustrative View **115b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Views West on East Houston Street from the Bowery

Figure 8-82



No-Action View **116a**



With-Action Illustrative View **116b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Mercer Street View North from Bleecker Street

Figure 8-83



No-Action View **117a**



With-Action Illustrative View **117b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - LaGuardia Place
View Southeast from West 3rd Street
Figure 8-84



No-Action View **118a**



With-Action Illustrative View **118b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - LaGuardia Place View North from Bleecker Street

Figure 8-85



No-Action View **119a**



With-Action Illustrative View **119b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views -
North Block Open Space
View West from Mercer Street



No-Action View **120a**



With-Action Illustrative View **120b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - LaGuardia Place
View Southeast from West 3rd Street

Figure 8-87



No-Action View **121a**



With-Action Illustrative View **121b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - North Block Open Space View Southeast from LaGuardia Place

Figure 8-88

12.29.11



No-Action View **122a**



With-Action Illustrative View **122b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views - Washington Square Village Portal View South from West 3rd Street at Wooster Street Alignment

Figure 8-89



No-Action View **123a**



With-Action Illustrative View **123b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views -
North Block Open Space
View Northeast, from Site Interior

Figure 8-90



No-Action View **124a**



With-Action Illustrative View **124b**

No-Action and With-Action Comparative Views -
View South from Washington Arch
Figure 8-91

Houston and Bleecker Streets. The largest tower—in terms of both height and floorplate—would be located at the northwest corner of Mercer and West Houston Streets, and there would be a shorter (138-foot-tall) section on the west side of the tower to transition the building down to the adjacent pedestrian walkway (that will be widened as described below) and the University Village grounds. This tallest tower would be placed on West Houston Street, which is a wide street. The building may have a rain screen and glass curtain wall. The 275-tall tower would match the heights of the three University Village towers and would be similar to them as well in terms of massing. The massing of the Zipper Building along Mercer Street responds to the narrowness of the street, and the five tower volumes would have widths comparable to those of many of the loft buildings along Mercer Street, Broadway, and in the Commercial Overlay Area and to those of the Washington Square Village residential buildings. In addition, like most of those loft buildings, the facades of the Zipper Building's tower volumes would rise with minimal setbacks on the upper floors. The varied massing and staggered heights would reference the arrangement of buildings across the street and on the surrounding streets where there are variegated heights. The heights of the Zipper Building's tower volumes would be similar to building heights in the surrounding area, such as on Mercer Street where the block between West Houston and Bleecker Streets contains buildings of 142, 173, and 150 feet in height and the block between Bleecker and West 3rd Streets contains buildings of 129, 113, 150, and 194 feet in height. Further, the building's heights would be comparable to the heights of the 275-foot-tall University Village towers and 159-foot-tall Washington Square Village residential buildings. The Zipper Building would have transparent and active ground floors with multiple uses along each façade in contrast to the blank facades of the Coles building.

The grocery store site would be redeveloped with the approximately 225,000-square-foot 14-story Bleecker Building. The new building would contain academic space, student housing, and a public school. The taller, 14-story (178-foot-tall to the roof parapet and 208-foot-tall to the top of the bulkhead) portion would face LaGuardia Place and is expected to have a rain screen and glass curtain wall. Like the Zipper Building, it would have transparent and active ground floors. A shorter, seven-story (108-foot-tall) section facing the interior of the South Block would contain the public school, and is anticipated to have a largely glass curtain wall with louvered screens. The placement of the taller section of the building on LaGuardia Place would shift the building's bulk away from the north-facing windows of the 505 LaGuardia Place tower. The Bleecker Building would be taller than the buildings on the west side of LaGaurdia Place across from the Proposed Development Area, but it would be substantially shorter than the 275-foot-tall University Village Towers and similar in height to the 159-foot-tall Washington Square Village residential buildings, the 158-foot-tall Bobst Library, and the 143-foot-tall apartment building at the southwest corner of LaGuardia Place and West 3rd Street.

To create a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape and to better integrate the South Block into the adjacent streets and public realm, the proposed project would modify some of the landscape elements of the University Village complex. The existing approximately six-foot-tall fences along Bleecker Street and part of West Houston Street would be replaced with new low fences and low perimeter plantings, allowing for improved views into the site and a more pedestrian friendly perimeter. (See **Figure 8-68** for No-Action and With-Action views of the perimeter adjacent to Silver Tower I.) (The six-foot-tall fence for 505 LaGuardia Place, along LaGuardia Place and part of West Houston Street, would remain.) The grove of trees, located along Bleecker Street, would receive new ground cover plantings and would be extended eastward to align with the western boundary of the north-south pedestrian walkway. That passageway, referred to as the Greene Street Walk, would be substantially widened from approximately six

feet to approximately 30 feet. This modification would improve the visibility of the walkway and its openness to West Houston and Bleecker Streets and would be a significant improvement to the streetscape (see **Figure 8-69** for No-Action and With-Action views of the walkway entrance on West Houston Street.) The walkway would become substantially more visible on West Houston Street and inviting to pedestrians. It would no longer appear as a private, secondary walkway through the block. The widened passageway would include trees and low shrubs and generous seating opportunities to create an inviting, publicly accessible open space and dramatically improved pedestrian passage through the block (see **Figure 8-70** for No-Action and With-Action views of the walkway).

Changes to the open spaces at the southeast corner of the University Village complex would improve the landscape of the site and create an active and pedestrian-friendly border with the Greene Street Walk. The existing dog run located on Mercer Street adjacent to the existing Cole building would be relocated to the site of the existing playground at the southeast corner of the University Village complex (see **Figure 8-69**). The new dog run would be accessed from the new Greene Street Walk. The existing concrete wall along West Houston Street (which is several feet tall) would remain, but some of the existing fencing would be removed and the widened and improved walkway would reduce the effect of this wall by opening the site at this location and improving visibility. A new, approximately 11,000-square-foot children's playground would be created on the University Village site between the relocated dog run and Silver Tower II. The new playground would incorporate the existing sculptural concrete components in this area of the University Village site, but there would be landscape improvements. The new playground would bring activity to the Greene Street Walk and the southeast corner of the University Village site (see **Figure 8-71**). Other landscape changes to the University Village site would be along the south sidewalk on Bleecker Street where there would be new trees, low plantings, and possibly benches. These changes would make the perimeter of the site along Bleecker Street more pedestrian friendly by softening the barrier to the complex and making it more open to the street. No landscape changes are proposed for the site around 505 LaGuardia Place, the Time Landscape, or the Community Gardens.

The Zipper Building and Bleecker Building would increase the density of the South Block. Although these new buildings would replace two low-rise structures, thus lessening the openness of the South Block to the sky at the northwest corner and eastern edge, their placement at the perimeter of the South Block would not alter the open character at the center of the block and would preserve views into the University Village complex from the adjacent sidewalks on Bleecker Street, LaGuardia Place, and West Houston Street. The existing grocery store and Coles building contribute to the South Block's removal from the surrounding streetscapes and its uninviting street frontages. The Zipper and Bleecker Buildings would replace those non-descript, largely windowless structures with new buildings that feature transparent and active ground floors. While the Mercer Street Strip—a public space feature of the South Block—would be eliminated, the Zipper Building would create an active streetwall at the sidewalk, thus improving the integration of the South Block into the adjacent streets. New open spaces of a similar size to the Mercer Street Strip would be built midblock on the west side of the Zipper Building. Further, the widened and enhanced pedestrian walkway (the Greene Street Walk), the enlarged grove of trees that would also have new low plantings, and the lowering of fences with the addition of new plantings on Bleecker and West Houston Streets would soften the edges of the block, open views into the site, and create a more pedestrian friendly perimeter. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on the urban design of the South Block.

North Block

On the North Block, a temporary, approximately 38-foot-tall, 30,000-square-foot gymnasium would be constructed in the location of the existing Washington Square Village playground (see **Figure 8-58**). That playground would be temporarily relocated to the elevated, private open space at the center of the block. The Mercer Playground in the Mercer Street Strip would be altered through the removal and lowering of fences and new plantings, and a new public open space would be constructed adjacent to the south of the temporary building where there is an existing, private paved parking and service area. Access to the gymnasium would be from the new paved open space, which would have benches and no fencing. New planted areas with low fences would be built at the southern end of the strip. Thus, the sidewalk along Mercer Street would have less fencing, and the interior of the block would be open to the street in two locations. Although the gymnasium would remove trees located around and within the existing playground and would lessen the openness to the sky of the block's interior as seen from Mercer Street, it would not have significant adverse impacts on the urban design of the North Block. The low height of the building and its location between the two Washington Square Village residential buildings and on the west side of the strip would lessen its visibility from beyond the immediate vicinity. It would be prominently visible from Mercer Street but the streetscape would be improved through the removal of fencing along the sidewalk and the creation of a publicly accessible open space with seating. The Mercer Street Strip would remain, including some of the tall trees within the Mercer Playground, and there would be new plantings to maintain the greenery of the site.

COMMERCIAL OVERLAY AREA

With the Proposed Actions, it is anticipated that ground floor alterations would be made to six buildings in the Commercial Overlay Area to add new ground-floor retail spaces. These new retail spaces would be located along Washington Place and on Waverly Place where there are existing retail storefronts. Altering the ground floors of six buildings and increasing the amount of retail spaces in the Commercial Overlay Area would not have significant adverse urban design impacts and would, in fact, improve the pedestrian experience in the area. Many buildings in the Commercial Overlay Area already have altered ground floors, and the Proposed Actions would have beneficial streetscape effects through the creation of enlivened ground floors and increased pedestrian activity. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts to the urban design of the Commercial Overlay Area.

MERCER PLAZA AREA

The demapping of the Mercer Plaza Area would have no effect on urban design and visual resources.

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

The Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on the urban design and visual resources of the 400-foot study area. As described above, the Proposed Actions would have beneficial streetscape effects through the landscape changes to the University Village site, the creation of the widened and enhanced Greene Street Walk, the replacement of non-descript mostly windowless buildings on the South Block with new buildings that would have transparent and active ground floors, the improvements to the Mercer Street open space on the North Block, and the addition of new retail spaces to existing buildings in the Commercial Overlay Area.

While the 768,100-square-foot (above grade) Zipper Building would be larger in terms of floor area than other buildings in the study area, it would be massed to respond to the different existing contexts along Houston and Mercer Streets and to the adjacent University Village complex. Its massing of staggered, narrow towers of varying heights above a low-rise base would serve to break up the building's bulk, put the largest building component on West Houston Street, and pull some of the mass away from Mercer Street and the University Village complex (see **Figures 8-72** and **8-73** for No-Action and With-Action views of the Zipper Building site). The 225,000-square-foot Bleecker Building would be comparable in terms of floor area to the University Village towers (each of which is 227,000 square feet), smaller than the Washington Square Village residential buildings, comparable in terms of floor area to two buildings in the Commercial Overlay Area (the 252,000-square-foot Silver Center and the 218,000-square-foot apartment building at 1 University Place) and to buildings in the study area like the 232,000-square-foot Kimmel Center and the 204,000-square-foot Cable Building. Further, it would be smaller than multiple buildings in the 400-foot study area, including the 470,000-square-foot Bobst Library and the two apartment buildings at 300 and 310 Mercer Street (on the block bounded by East Eighth Street, Broadway, Waverly Place, and Mercer Street), which are 455,000 square feet and 512,000 square feet.

The heights of the two new buildings on the South Block would also be in keeping with the varied heights in the 400-foot study area. As mentioned above, the West Houston Street tower would be the same height as the three 275-foot-tall University Village towers, and the heights of the other components would be in keeping with the heights of buildings along the east side of Mercer Street where the taller buildings are 113, 129, 142, 150, 173, and 194 feet tall. Study area buildings of taller or comparable height include the 240-foot-tall apartment building at 1 University Place (located in the Commercial Overlay Area), the 143-foot-tall apartment building at 12-16 Washington Place (located in the Commercial Overlay Area), the 150-foot-tall Bobst Library, the 155-foot-tall NYU Shimkin Hall, the 164-foot-tall Warren Weaver Hall, the 160-foot-tall Kimmel Center, the 142-foot-tall Cable Building, the 194-foot-tall NYU Law School building on Mercer Street, the 303-foot-tall apartment building at 300 Mercer Street, the 327-foot-tall apartment building at 310 Mercer Street, the 270-foot-tall apartment building at 1 Fifth Avenue, the 184-foot-tall apartment building at 11 Fifth Avenue, and the 225-foot-tall apartment building at 20 East Ninth Street.

Built to the lot lines on the South Block, the Zipper Building and the Bleecker Building would not obstruct the view corridors on the adjacent streets—West Houston Street, Mercer Street, LaGuardia Place, and Bleecker Street (see **Figures 8-73** and **8-74**). In these views, they would replace non-descript low-rise buildings with new, tall buildings massed to respond to their surrounding contexts and with active and transparent ground floors. The Zipper Building would be visible from south of West Houston Street in the northward view corridors on Mercer and Greene Streets but, in those view corridors, the building would be a tall background building to the mid-rise loft buildings lining those streets and would not adversely affect the pedestrian experiences along those streets. On Greene Street, the building would have less visibility, because there would be a shorter (138-foot-tall) section fronting on the adjacent Greene Street Walk, which would roughly align with the Greene Street view corridor (see **Figure 8-75**). On Mercer Street in the vicinity of West Houston Street, the Zipper Building would be prominently visible, but it would not block any long views in the Mercer Street view corridor, and the staggered arrangement of the tower volumes would pull portions of the bulk back from that view corridor (i.e., above the base, the façade would not present a continuous wall along Mercer Street but would have deeply recessed sections and some of the tower volumes would not be

visible) (see **Figure 8-76**). From farther south along Mercer Street, the Zipper Building would still be clearly visible, but it would be a tall background building like the existing University Village towers (see **Figure 8-77**). Both the Bleecker and Zipper Buildings would be visible along Bleecker Street, from west of LaGuardia Place and from east of Mercer Street, along with the southern Washington Square Village residential building, but they would not block any significant views (see **Figures 8-74** and **8-78**). The Zipper Building would be visible along Houston Street, along with the University Village towers (as described below).

The two new buildings would not have significant adverse impacts on visual resources. As the Bleecker Building would be set back from LaGuardia Place outside of the LaGuardia Place Strip, it would not obstruct northward views that include Washington Square Park, the Washington Square Arch, or 1 Fifth Avenue. It is not likely that either proposed building would be visible from within the portion of Washington Square Park that is located in the 400-foot-study area. As described above, there is limited visibility of the Washington Square Village and University Village buildings from the section of the park that falls within 400 feet of the project area. From where the new buildings could be seen, they would be background buildings seen among numerous buildings of varying heights. On West Houston Street, the Zipper Building would partially obscure eastward views of the Cable Building, but this would not be a significant adverse impact, because the Cable Building would still be prominently visible in its immediate vicinity and in westward views on East Houston Street. Further, the University Village complex already partially obscures views of the Cable Building from western vantage points on West Houston Street.

The Zipper and Bleecker Buildings would obstruct some views of the University Village towers from adjacent sidewalks. At the intersections of Mercer Street with West Houston and Bleecker Streets, the Zipper Building would block views of the University Village towers. Similarly, the Bleecker Building would block views of the towers from the intersection of Bleecker Street and LaGuardia Place. These blocked views, however, would not be significant adverse impacts. From mid-block on Houston and Bleecker Streets and LaGuardia Place adjacent to the South Block, the University Village towers would still be prominently visible as an integrated whole. In addition, the towers would still be visible from other locations within the study area. On West Houston Street, the Zipper Building would change the long eastward views to the University Village towers, but this change would not be a significant adverse impact as those views would not be blocked. The University Village towers would be in the foreground of the views, and the Zipper Building would be another tall building on the South Block of the Proposed Development Area. In addition, the Zipper Building would be massed with the tallest (275-foot) portion on Mercer Street and a transitional shorter (138-foot-tall) tower volume between the tallest portion and Silver Tower I to create a space between the two equally tall towers that would maintain the prominent free-standing quality of Silver Tower I. From West Houston Street, the uppermost floors of the Bleecker Building would be visible beyond intervening buildings. The anticipated changes in the Commercial Overlay Area—which would be confined to the alteration of building ground floors—would not affect view corridors and visual resources in the 400-foot study area.

¼-MILE STUDY AREA

The Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on the urban design and visual resources of the ¼-mile study area. As discussed above, there is no visual relationship between the Proposed Development Area and most of the ¼-mile study area. In addition, the

Zipper Building and the Bleecker Building would be in keeping with building heights and building bulk found throughout the ¼-mile study area.

In views east and west on Bleecker Street, there would be limited visibility of the Bleecker and Zipper Buildings due to their setback position from Bleecker Street and to intervening buildings (see **Figure 8-79**). Similarly, there would be minimal views of the Bleecker Building in the West Broadway view corridor, where it would be seen along with mid-rise loft buildings, 505 LaGuardia Place, and Bobst Library. From within Washington Square Park and in views south on Fifth Avenue and University Place, there would be limited views of the two new buildings on the South Block of the Proposed Development Area. It is possible that portions of the upper floors of those buildings would be visible from the park, but they would be visible with 505 LaGuardia Place in the background of the NYU Kimmel Center, Bobst Library, and Furman Hall (see **Figure 8-80**). Therefore, the new buildings would not affect the experience of park users. The new buildings would be less visible in the Fifth Avenue and University Place view corridors, which are currently lined by tall buildings. From south of West Houston Street, the new buildings would likely be visible in the northward views along Mercer, Greene, and Wooster Streets. In those view corridors, the new buildings would be visible as tall background buildings along with the University Village towers and the southern Washington Square Village residential building.

In the Houston Street view corridors, the Zipper Building would be clearly visible, especially from the west. In eastward views, it would form a backdrop to the University Village towers (see **Figure 8-81**). That altered view, however, would not substantially alter the pedestrian experience and would not be a significant adverse impact as the University Village towers would still be prominent foreground structures and the massing and varied heights of the Zipper Building would lessen its visual effect on the University Village towers. From the east on East Houston Street, the Zipper Building would obscure views of 505 LaGuardia Place (see **Figure 8-82**) but those are not significant views of that tower or the other two towers, as only the upper floors are visible from limited locations, and there are other locations within the study area from where the tower would continue to be visible. The proposed buildings would have no visual relationship with other visual resources in the ¼-mile study area. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on visual resources.

2031 PHASE 2

The section below describes the development that would result from the Proposed Actions on the North Block of the Proposed Development Area in the 2031 analysis year and assesses the potential impacts of that development on the urban design and visual resources of the Proposed Development Area and the two project study areas. In summary, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts on urban design and visual resources and would have beneficial, rather than adverse, impacts on the streetscape and pedestrian experience.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

By 2031 two new academic buildings—the Mercer Building and the LaGuardia Building—would be developed on the North Block. (See **Figures 8-59** through **8-65** for an illustrative axonometric view, a site plan, an aerial view, and elevations of the full build-out of the Proposed Development Area by 2031.) The proposed academic buildings on the North Block would be sited at the east and west ends of the block between the two existing Washington Square Village residential buildings and positioned to open up the interior of the block, which would be brought

to grade, to Mercer Street and LaGuardia Place. The Mercer Building would replace the temporary gymnasium that would have been constructed on the site before 2021, and the LaGuardia Building would replace the Washington Square Village retail building. New publicly accessible open spaces would also be constructed on the North Block, and these open spaces would be visible to, and accessible from, the adjacent streets. No changes are anticipated on the South Block in the future with the Proposed Actions between the 2021 and 2031 analysis years.

Much of the floor area of the two new buildings would be located below grade. The above-grade portions of the buildings have been designed—through their placement on the site and their rounded, tapering forms—to maximize access to light and air to the new open spaces, to the interiors of the new buildings, and to the adjacent Washington Square Village residential buildings. Both new buildings would have curved footprints and forms that would taper upwards. The greatest degree of incline would occur on the buildings' interior facades fronting on the central open space, but the other facades—those facing the street and the existing Washington Square Village residential buildings—would also curve inwardly. The rounded, tapered forms of the proposed buildings would be unlike the slab-like forms of the Washington Square Village residential buildings, but their design would pull the bulk of the proposed buildings away from the existing residential buildings. The design and placement of the proposed buildings would enhance physical and visual access to the proposed street-level open spaces that would be created in the middle of the North Block, as each building would, at a minimum, be set back 60 feet (the typical width of many Manhattan streets) at ground level from the Washington Square Village residential buildings to create wide, inviting entrances into the site and to maximize the amount of open space that could be located on the street frontages and between the proposed buildings and the adjacent, existing buildings at grade. Further, the proposed buildings would not encroach within the adjacent Mercer Street and LaGuardia Place Strips, which would be mapped as parkland above grade. In addition, the building forms would slope away from the adjacent streets and buildings to establish views across the North Block's proposed open space and to maintain views north and south along LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street (see **Figures 8-83** and **8-84**).

The Mercer Building would be a 14-story (218-foot-tall to the roof parapet and 245-foot-tall to the top of the mechanical bulkhead) curved structure (250,000 square feet above grade) that would be similar in height to components of the Zipper Building but shorter than the three University Village towers (see **Figure 8-83**). The LaGuardia Building (160,000 square feet above grade) would have a similar form and massing but would be lower in height. At 128 feet tall to the roof parapet (8 stories and 155 feet tall to the top of the mechanical bulkhead), it would be 30 feet shorter than the Washington Square Village residential buildings, as well as 50 feet shorter than the Bleecker Building on the South Block that would be constructed by 2021. On Mercer Street and LaGuardia Place, the proposed buildings would have larger street frontages than the Washington Square Village residential buildings but the 60-foot-wide at-grade spaces between the proposed buildings and the existing buildings would allow substantial views into the site and the placement of landscaped areas along those streets. The Mercer and LaGuardia Buildings are expected to have primarily glass curtain walls and would contain academic uses, potentially with retail on the ground floor. Light wells allowing for the placement of substantial portions of the buildings' programs underground would be located at the base of each building to provide sunlight to the below-grade areas. These light wells would be approximately two levels below-grade, and they would be open at ground level to the spaces below. Both light wells would be landscaped at the bottom.

Approximately 3.4 acres of new publicly accessible, at-grade open space would be created on the North Block between the Washington Square Village residential buildings. In addition to the removal of the temporary gymnasium and the LaGuardia Place retail building, Adrienne's Garden and the southern sections of the LaGuardia Landscape would be removed and replaced (see **Figure 8-85**). The statue of Fiorello LaGuardia would be removed, protected during construction, and returned to the site in its original location after construction. The mid-block courtyard, including the elevated plaza, partially underground garage, and driveways, would be removed. The Mercer Playground in the Mercer Street Strip would be replaced with a new, landscaped playground enclosed with less fencing. To function as a public garden, the proposed open space would be at street level and would be open to LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street at two locations on each street as well as through entrances at demapped Wooster and Greene Streets, entrances which will be redesigned. The proposed landscape design would replace an automobile-oriented plan and largely above-grade private open space enclosed by fences along LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street with a new, publicly accessible pedestrian-focused landscape plan. The entire open space has been brought down to grade so that it reads and functions as one open space accessible from, and visible to, the street. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would have beneficial, rather than adverse, impacts on the streetscape of the adjacent streets.

The proposed open space has been designed to substantially enhance visible and physical access from the surrounding streets. Unlike the existing raised landscaped plaza, which is not publicly accessible or visible from the street, the proposed open space would be accessible from clearly defined pedestrian entrances at the corners of the North Block where plazas, gardens, and landscaped paths would join the interior open space with the adjacent public sidewalks (see **Figures 8-86**, **8-87**, and **8-88**). Additional north-south pedestrian access points would replace three of the existing driveway entrances through the Washington Square Village residential buildings (see **Figures 8-89** and **8-90**). (The eastern driveway entrance on West 3rd Street would provide vehicular access to a new, below-grade parking garage, along with a sidewalk entry into the central open space.) The new pedestrian entrances on LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street and on West 3rd and Bleecker Streets through the openings in the existing buildings would provide views into the landscape and physical access to the new publicly accessible open space, replacing the partial views along the paved driveways. This would beneficially change the relationship of the Washington Square Village buildings to the street, and would invite pedestrians into the site. The open space itself would have a variety of amenities such as public lawns for multiple uses, fixed and moveable seating, shade trees, open paved spaces, and three playgrounds. Paving materials would be varied and would be used to distinguish different pathways and uses on the North Block. A variety of plantings of different heights, colors, seasonal characteristics, and densities would be used throughout the open space.

Like the Proposed Actions in the 2021 analysis year, the Proposed Actions in the 2031 analysis year would have beneficial effects on the streetscape and the pedestrian experience around the North Block through the creation of a new publicly accessible open space, landscape changes—including the removal of perimeter fences—that would better connect the midblock open space to the adjacent sidewalks, the construction of two new buildings that would have transparent and active ground floors, and the opening of views through the North Block.

Limited alterations would be made to Washington Square Village's north and south residential buildings. These include: the removal of the canopies at the driveway portals; the re-cladding of the ground floor of each building with glass; and re-programming of the ground floors and basements with academic space, university-related retail, and a new loading bay east of the garage entry on West 3rd Street. These changes would improve the pedestrian experience

adjacent to these buildings. There would be a new curb cut for the loading bay, which would be 34 feet wide and 40 feet deep within the north Washington Square Village residential building. Although the loading bay would be a new feature on the site, there are two existing curb cuts on Bleecker Street and corresponding vehicular portals through the north Washington Square Village residential building, and there would continue to be two existing curb cuts on that frontage of the North Block under the Proposed Actions. The curb cuts would be concentrated on one side of the block minimizing their disruption. The existing street frontages of the Washington Square Village residential buildings have a vehicular character due to the driveway portals. Therefore, the creation of a loading bay under the Proposed Actions would not adversely effect the streetscape of the North Block along Bleecker Street, especially as the western portal would become a pedestrian entrance into the new publicly accessible open space within the block.

Overall, the Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on the urban design of the North Block.

COMMERCIAL OVERLAY AREA

No new development in the Commercial Overlay Area is expected between 2021 and 2031.

MERCER PLAZA AREA

As with the 2021 analysis year, no changes are anticipated for the Mercer Plaza Area with the Proposed Actions by 2031.

400-FOOT STUDY AREA

The Proposed Actions would not be expected to have significant adverse impacts on the urban design and visual resources of the 400-foot study area in the 2031 analysis year. The Proposed Actions would increase the density of the North Block, but the site plan and the forms of the new buildings would open the site to public access and street views, improving the pedestrian experience. The buildings' tapered, curved forms would pull their bulk away from LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street, as well as from the adjacent Washington Square Village residential buildings. The new academic uses and public open spaces would be consistent with uses in the 400-foot study area. At 218 and 128 feet tall to the roof parapets, the Mercer and LaGuardia Buildings would fall within the range of building heights found on the North and South Blocks and overall within the 400-foot study area where there are numerous, similarly tall buildings that range in height up to 327 feet (the apartment building at 310 Mercer Street). In addition, locating the shorter building on LaGuardia Place would provide a transition to the lower building heights found on LaGuardia Place and the blocks to the west, while siting the taller building on Mercer Street would be in keeping with the taller heights of the loft and academic buildings found along Mercer Street and Broadway.

The sculptural forms of the proposed buildings would contrast with the predominantly rectilinear forms of buildings in the 400-foot study area but, as mentioned above, those forms seek to bring light and air to the new publicly accessible open space on the North Block; to provide views into and through the block; and to provide an architectural complement to the existing ensemble. Further, the new buildings would be constructed on large blocks developed with modern buildings that currently contrast in terms of scale, materials, style, and form with the older, more traditional tenement and loft buildings throughout the study area. There are also examples of buildings in the 400-foot study area that do not have strictly boxy massing and that employ

setbacks and recesses. At 250,000 and 160,000 square feet (above grade), the two proposed buildings on the North Block would be in keeping with the range of building floor areas found throughout the study area.

It is expected that there would be limited views of the proposed LaGuardia Building within the 400-foot study area. As there are no east-west view corridors to the site of that building, the LaGuardia Building would have limited or no visibility from the eastern and western portions of the study area due to intervening buildings. The LaGuardia Building would be shorter than the adjacent Washington Square Village residential buildings and would be set back from LaGuardia Place almost in line with those buildings. Therefore, there would be limited views north along LaGuardia Place and West Broadway of the proposed LaGuardia Building. The new building would be visible from within the portion of Washington Square Park that falls within the 400-foot study area, where it would be seen between and beyond the Bobst Library and the Kimmel Center (see **Figure 8-91**). In that view from the paved area between Washington Arch and the fountain, the LaGuardia Building would be visible with the Washington Square Village north building and the upper floors of 505 LaGuardia Place. Although the Mercer Building would be taller than the Washington Square Village residential buildings (by 60 feet), it is expected that there would be limited views of it from within the study area. It would be prominently visible from the immediate vicinity on Mercer Street, but from farther away its visibility would diminish. In the northward view corridor on Mercer Street from south of West Houston Street, the taller Zipper Building, which would be built to the Mercer Street sidewalk, would obscure or block views of the Mercer Building (see **Figure 8-76**). From the north, the proposed building could be visible, but only the uppermost 60 feet could be seen beyond the south Washington Square Village residential building on Bleecker Street, appearing among other tall buildings.

Views of the four new buildings that would be constructed in the Proposed Development Area would be largely the same by the 2031 analysis year as by the 2021 analysis year, discussed above, because of the limited visibility of the Mercer and LaGuardia Buildings from beyond their immediate vicinities. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on view corridors or visual resources in the 400-foot study area in the 2031 analysis year.

¼-MILE STUDY AREA

The Proposed Actions would not have significant adverse impacts on the urban design and visual resources of the ¼-mile study area. As discussed above, there is no visual relationship between the Proposed Development Area and most of the ¼-mile study area. As there are no east-west view corridors to the sites of the LaGuardia and Mercer Buildings on the North Block, those buildings would not be visible from the eastern and western portions of the study area. While West Houston Street, from west of Sixth Avenue, does include limited views to the North Block, the proposed buildings would be obscured by the south Washington Square Village residential building on Bleecker Street. The LaGuardia Building would not be visible from this vantage point on West Houston Street as it would be shorter than the south Washington Square Village residential building. Only the uppermost portion of the Mercer Building could be visible, and this limited visibility would have no effect on the northeastward view along West Houston Street. As within the 400-foot study area, there would be limited views southward of the LaGuardia and Mercer Buildings, because the existing north Washington Square Village residential building on West 3rd Street would be in the foreground and that building is taller than the proposed LaGuardia Building. From Washington Square and in views south on Fifth Avenue

and University Place, only the uppermost 60 feet of the Mercer Building could be seen beyond the north Washington Square Village residential building, and this minimal visibility would have no effect on those views. It is not likely that the LaGuardia Building would be visible from the southern portion of the study area as it would be shorter than the south Washington Square Village residential building on Bleecker Street and would be aligned with the western edge of the building at ground level, from which point it would taper away from the street. Further, it is not likely that the Mercer Building would be visible in views north on Greene and Mercer Streets from within the ¼-mile study area, because of the intervening Zipper Building (see **Figure 8-77**). Therefore, the effects of the Proposed Actions on views in the 2031 analysis year would be similar to those in the 2021 analysis year, described above, and there would be no significant adverse impacts on view corridors and visual resources. There would also not be any significant adverse impacts on urban design in the ¼-mile study area. The bulk and height of the proposed buildings would be in keeping with the urban design of the study area and, in total, the heights, bulk, massing, and uses of the four buildings constructed in the Proposed Development Area would be compatible with those aspects of the study area's urban design.

PEDESTRIAN WIND CONDITIONS

As discussed in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, 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.

Since the Proposed Actions would result in the construction of large buildings close to one another and close to existing buildings on the North and South Blocks of the Proposed Development Area, there is the potential for downwash and channeling effects, and consequent elevated pedestrian-level wind conditions. In light of this potential, a pedestrian wind analysis was undertaken by the firm Rowan William Davies & Irwin, Inc. (RWDI) to better understand wind conditions within the Proposed Development Area and assess whether the Proposed Actions might result in accelerated ground-level winds.

In completing the assessment of potential wind effects, wind conditions at and around the Proposed Development Area for existing conditions and the Future with the Proposed Actions were compared against wind force criteria developed by RWDI. The assessment was based on a 55 mile per hour (mph) wind safety criterion, since wind gusts at that level have been shown to have the potential to affect a pedestrian's balance and footing. With this criterion, wind reduction measures should be considered if winds of this magnitude could occur more than two times per season at locations where pedestrians would be expected to be present.

Existing wind conditions at and around the Proposed Development Area were evaluated based on wind conditions monitored at United States National Weather Service meteorological stations at John F. Kennedy and Newark Airports for the period 1948 through 2000. Wind conditions were analyzed for the May through October "summer" period and November through April "winter" period. A review of these data indicated that winds exceeding 20 mph approximately occurred 11 percent of the time during the summer period and approximately 24 percent of the time during the winter period, and were predominately from the northwest in both seasons.

This testing was conducted in a wind tunnel using a scale model of the proposed and existing buildings in the Proposed Development Area, the existing and Proposed Actions' landscape elements, and surrounding buildings and topography within a 1,600 foot radius of the Proposed Development Area. Receptors were placed both on and off-site, in areas where pedestrian activity would be expected.

The results of the wind tunnel analysis indicated that during the summer months (May through October), there is no potential for pedestrian wind conditions which exceed RWDI's safety criteria at any of the receptor locations tested, in both existing conditions and in the Future With the Proposed Actions. During the winter months (November through April), the wind tunnel analysis for existing conditions shows that wind conditions exceed RWDI's safety criteria at one location, directly southeast of the 505 LaGuardia building on the South Block. In the Future with the Proposed Actions, the analysis shows that this elevated wind condition would be eliminated, and there would be no potential for pedestrian wind conditions which exceed RWDI's safety criteria at any other receptor location tested. Therefore, no significant adverse urban design impacts would result from potential pedestrian wind conditions with the Proposed Actions. ✷