Chapter 7: Historic Resources

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential of the proposed action to affect historic resources; historic resources include both archaeological and architectural resources. The proposed project would consist of a new mixed-use development (residential, retail, and medical office space) to be constructed on Lots 5, 8, 10-13, 43, 52, 53, and 55 (the project site). In addition, the reasonable worst-case development scenario would include the development of residential and school uses on Lots 56, 57, 58, and 61 (see Figure 7-1).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has considered the project site, zoning lot, and rezoning area and concluded that they have no archaeological significance (letters dated May 7, 2003, and February 2, 2005). Therefore, an archaeological analysis was not performed as significant adverse impacts are not anticipated.

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

To account for visual and contextual effects as well as possible construction-related structural damage, the study area for architectural resources is defined as the area within an approximately 400-foot radius of the project site, zoning lot, and rezoning area. In accordance with the 2001 *City Environmental Quality Review* (*CEQR*) *Technical Manual* guidelines, the study area was surveyed to identify known and potential historic resources. Each of these resources is described below. Known historic resources are defined as National Historic Landmarks (NHL), properties listed on or determined eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR), New York City Landmarks (NYCL) or Historic Districts (NYCHD), and properties pending NYCL or NYCHD designation. Potential historic resources are properties that appear to meet eligibility criteria for S/NR listing or for NYCL designation. LPC reviewed this Historic Resources chapter and found the analysis acceptable (letter dated June 27, 2006).

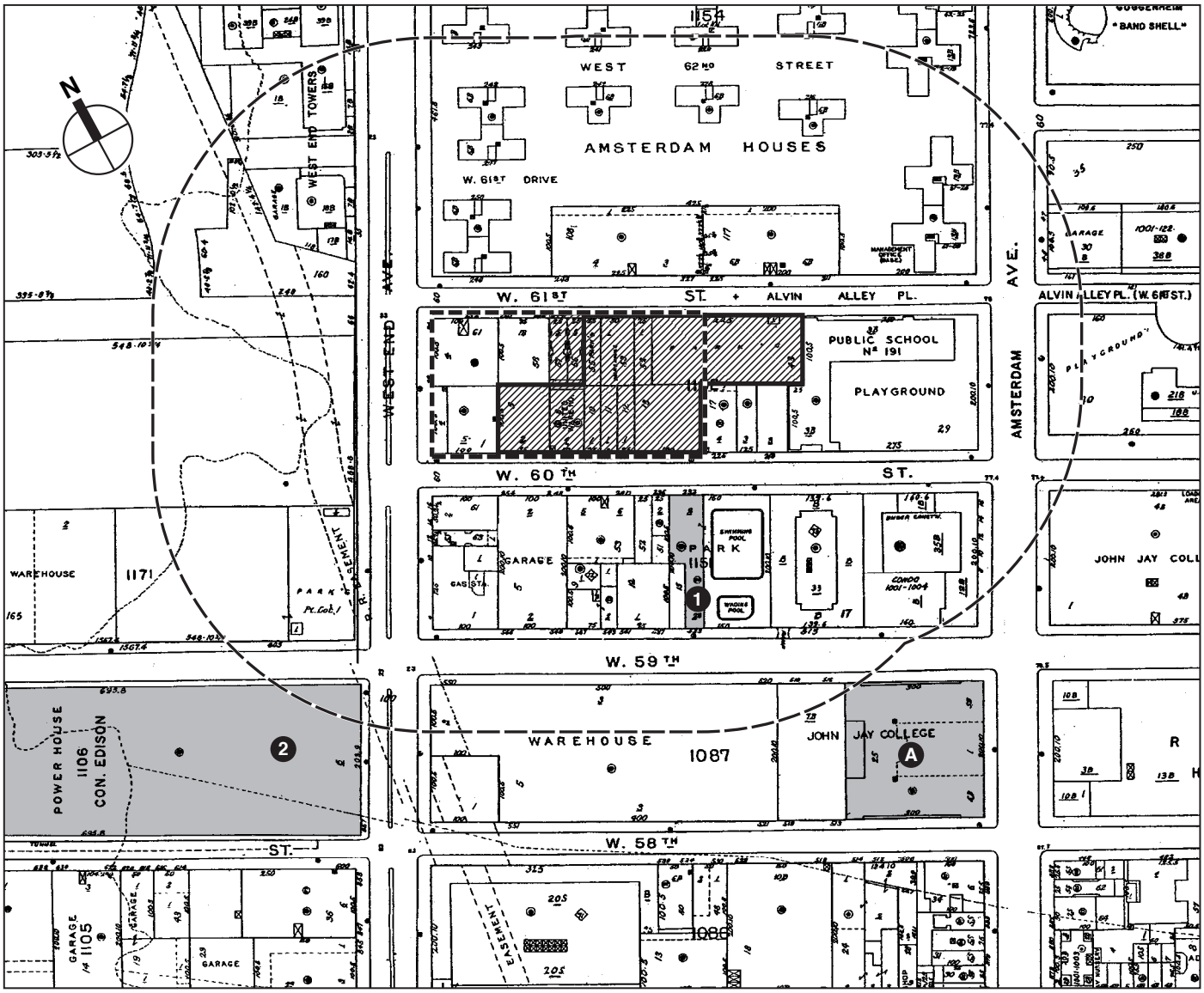
As detailed below, it is not anticipated that the proposed action would have any significant adverse impacts (physical, visual, or contextual) on architectural resources.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITE

Until recently, the project site was occupied by several one- to four-story buildings that dated to the early 20th century (see Figure 7-2). These buildings included a two-story brick taxi garage located at 247-251 West 60th Street, a four-story brick warehouse (ca. 1919) located at 243 West 60th Street, three one-story brick buildings located at 237-241 West 60th Street, and a one-story

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Proposed Rezoning Area Boundary

400-Foot Study Area Boundary

Project Site Boundary

Zoning Lot/Proposed General Large-Scale Development

Known Historic Resources

1. West 59th Street Recreation House/ West 60th Street Public (NYCL-eligible, S/NR-eligible)
2. Consolidated Edison Power House (S/NR-eligible)

Potential Historic Resources

A. John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Historic Resources
Figure 7-1



The project site along West 60th Street, view northwest **1**



The project site along West 61st Street, view southeast **2**

Project Site
Figure 7-2

warehouse at 234-238 West 61st Street. These structures have been demolished, and the project site is now vacant.

ZONING LOT AND REZONING AREA

The zoning lot includes the project site (see above) and two additional lots. These lots contain two late 19th/early 20th century five-story brick residential buildings at 242-244 West 61st Street. Within the rezoning area, there is a six-story school building that was recently completed at the northeast corner of West End Avenue and West 60th Street. Adjacent to this property is a four-story building (ca. 1931) at 28-34 West End Avenue. An early 20th-century one-story brick automotive facility is located at 246-250 West 61st Street. None of these buildings meet the criteria of eligibility for S/NR listing or for NYCL designation as described above.

STUDY AREA

KNOWN RESOURCES

Two known resources are located in the study area: the West 59th Street Recreation House/West 60th Street Public Bath and the Consolidated Edison Power House.

West 59th Street Recreation House/West 60th Street Public Bath (NYCL-eligible, S/NR-eligible)

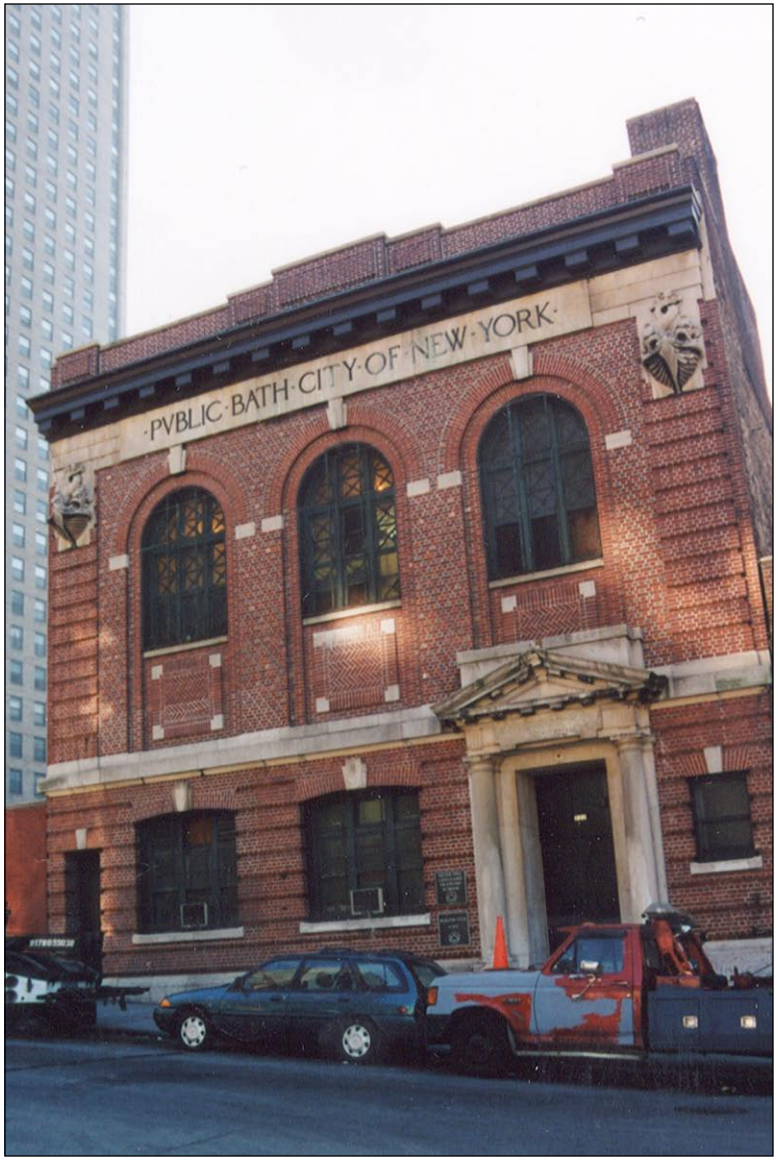
Located at 533 West 59th Street and 232 West 60th Street, south of the project site, the West 59th Street Recreation House/West 60th Street Public Bath is a throughblock structure that was constructed in two phases (see Figure 7-3). Designed by Werner & Windolf, the Public Bath was constructed in 1906 by the City of New York. Public bathing facilities were originally built for hygienic reasons, because indoor plumbing was still a rarity in most working-class tenement areas. At the turn of the century, when the city had to abandon its floating baths on the East and Hudson Rivers due to water pollution, an effort was made to provide public indoor bathing and recreational facilities. Usually containing shower and bath facilities, the early bath houses were often built by charitable organizations in the densest slums of the city. While the earlier bathhouses were conceived for hygiene, later facilities were built to serve recreational needs as well. Later expansions of the facility created an extension to West 59th Street and an outdoor pool to the east. The West 59th Street Recreation House is a narrow two-story Tudor Revival-style building that connects to the bath structure.

In a letter dated May 18, 2006 LPC determined that the West 59th Street Recreation House/West 60th Street Public Bath has been determined eligible for designation as a NYCL. It was previously determined eligible for listing on the S/NR.

The Consolidated Edison Power House (S/NR-eligible)

The Consolidated Edison Power House, originally the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) Power House, is a large neo-Renaissance Revival-style structure. It occupies most of the block bounded by Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues and West 58th and 59th Streets, west of the project site. Its high base of pink granite has crisply cut doorways and triple groups of windows (see Figure 7-4). The upper portion of the structure is clad in buff-colored Roman brick with matching terra cotta. Each of the bays has a tall round arch with an ornate terra-cotta frame; the arched bays are separated by brick pilasters with terra-cotta capitals, bases, and banding. Originally, six chimneys rose through the roof; these were replaced by a single stack in 1959. At the west end of the block is an undistinguished 1959 addition.

10.25.05



View south of the West 60th Street Public Bath facade **3**



View northeast of the West 59th Street Recreation House facade **4**

West 61st Street Rezoning
Project and Citywide GLSD Text Amendment

Historic Resources
Figure 7-3



View northwest of the Consolidated Edison Power House **5**



View northwest of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice **6**

The power house, built in 1900-1904, was intended to generate all of the power needed for New York City's first subway system. McKim, Mead & White, New York's most prominent architectural firm at the time, designed the exterior shell of the building, and IRT engineers designed the interior. Although on the scale of the great public works of the period, such as the New York Public Library, Grand Central Terminal, and Pennsylvania Station, the building's sophisticated design and utilitarian character place it in the same category as the Roman- and Renaissance-inspired comfort stations, bathhouses, small power plants, and garages that were built throughout New York City at the turn of the century.

The Consolidated Edison Power House has been determined eligible for S/NR-listing and LPC has held hearings to consider the building for NYCL designation.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

One potential resource was identified in the study area—the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. This building occupies the entire blockfront along Amsterdam Avenue, between West 58th and 59th Streets, southeast of the project site. Constructed between 1904 and 1906 as the DeWitt Clinton High School for boys, the college building is a five-and-one-half story brick and limestone structure in the Dutch Colonial style (see Figure 7-4). The H-plan of the school consists of two wings with stepped gables flanking a central courtyard. The building was designed by Charles B.J. Snyder, New York City's Superintendent of School Buildings from 1891 to 1923. During the 1980s, significant changes, including replacement of the windows and a substantial addition, were made to the building during an expansion project.

C. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION

In the future without the proposed project, a number of new residential and mixed-use developments are expected to be completed within the study area by 2008. These projects would be a continuation of recent development trends and patterns in the area. A proposed 20-story residential and community facility at 223-227 West 60th Street will be completed by 2008 on a site adjacent to the project site. Plans for John Jay College to expand its current location in the former DeWitt Clinton High School to create a full block campus have been approved, and construction is expected to be complete by 2008.

Just south of the project site, a 31-story residential building is under construction at Two West End Avenue for completion by 2007. Construction of this building would add a tall and modern building to the immediate study area. Southwest of the project site, the block bounded by West 57th and 58th Streets and Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues is under construction for a mixed-use development with a residential component recently completed in mid-2006 and full development to be completed by 2008.

D. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

PROJECT SITE

The project site would be rezoned and a residential building would be constructed on the project site, as described in Chapter 1, "Project Description." The proposed project would be massed to contain three distinct components (Buildings A, B, and C). The tallest component (Building C) would consist of a 27-story tower that would rise to a height of approximately 304 feet to the top

of the parapet*. The project (Building B) would rise to a height of approximately 97 feet before being set back and rising to a total height of approximately 172 feet. The project (Building A) would contain a base that would rise to a height of approximately 85 feet before being set back and rising to a total height of approximately 121 feet. As there are no historic resources located on the project site, there would be no significant adverse impact.

ZONING LOT AND REZONING AREA

Under the reasonable worst-case development scenario, it is assumed that a mix of residential and school uses would be developed on Lots 58 and 61 in the rezoning area, and two penthouse units would be constructed on Lot 56 and 57. As there are no historic resources located on the zoning lot or in the rezoning area, there would be no significant adverse impact.

STUDY AREA

The West 59th Street Recreation House/West 60th Street Public Bath (NYCL-eligible, S/NR-eligible) is located within 90 feet of the project site, and construction of the proposed project has the potential to cause damage to this building from ground-borne construction vibrations at the project site. Because the West 59th Street Recreation House/West 60th Street Public Bath is eligible for designation as a NYCL and listing on the S/NR, it is protected by the requirements laid out in the New York City Department of Buildings Technical Policy and Procedure Notice (TPPN) #10/88, concerning procedures for avoidance of damage to historic structures from adjacent construction. The TPPN defines an adjacent historic structure as being contiguous to or within a lateral distance of 90 feet from a lot under development or alteration. Developed by the Department of Buildings, the TPPN must be followed for construction within proximity of historic landmarks to avoid potential adverse impacts during construction. Under the TPPN a construction protection plan must be provided to LPC for review and approval prior to construction. The Consolidated Edison Power Plant is roughly 400 feet from the project site and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice is roughly 360 feet away. Thus, it is not expected that project construction would affect these resources.

In terms of contextual or visual impacts, the proposed building, at 27 stories, would be taller than the low-rise (one to six-story) buildings that are located in the area immediately surrounding the project site, including the West 59th Street Recreation House/West 60th Street Public Bath. However, as described in greater detail in Chapter 8, "Urban Design and Visual Resources," other tall and modern buildings are located within and just outside of the study area. A 20-story residential and community facility at 223-227 West 60th Street is under construction adjacent to the project site. A modern 31-story building is under construction immediately south of the project site at Two West End Avenue, and a modern, 33-story building is located on the lot next to the West 59th Street Recreation House/West 60th Street Public Bath. A high rise mixed-use development is proposed southwest of the project site on the block bounded by West 57th and 58th Streets and Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues. West End Towers is a modern apartment complex located within the northern boundary of the study area, with buildings that range in height from 15 to 39 stories. Other high-rise apartment buildings are located outside of the study area, but are visible from the project site. In addition, the two lots in the rezoning area could also be developed under the reasonable worst case development scenario with a 10-story

* All heights are measured from the mean curb elevation to the top of the parapet. The mean curb elevation at West 60th Street is 40.46 feet. At West 61st Street, the mean curb elevation is 51.49 feet.

(approximately 105 feet) building on Lot 58 and a 31-story (approximately 340 feet) building on Lot 61. Thus, the proposed building would be constructed in an area that already is developed with a mix of low-rise, mid-rise and high-rise buildings, and historic and modern structures.

No adverse visual impacts would be expected on any architectural resources in the study area, since the proposed development would not alter the setting of any resources or block views to any of these resources that are not already blocked by existing buildings. Although the proposed building would be visible in views north from the West 60th Street Public Bath, in views northeast from the Consolidated Edison Power House, and in views northwest from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, it would be similar in size and massing to existing buildings visible to the north, south and east.

It is not expected that the proposed development would have adverse contextual effects on the West 59th Street Recreation House/West 60th Street Public Bath, the Consolidated Edison Power House, or the John Jay College of Criminal Justice because the proposed building would not alter the mix of short and tall, modern and historic, commercial, industrial and residential buildings that have been—and are in the process of being—developed in and around the study area.

Overall, it is not expected that the proposed action would have any physical, visual, or contextual effects on any known or potential historic resources. ✷