

A. INTRODUCTION

The proposed project would result in the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory—a substantially vacant building listed on the State/National Registers of Historic Places and a designated New York City Landmark—with approximately 605,370 square feet of new uses, including retail, cinema, fitness club, restaurant space, and community facility space. Approximately 400 accessory parking spaces, utilizing approximately 164,285 square feet, would also be provided in the Armory’s basement levels. A new approximately 30,000-square-foot public open space would be developed adjacent to the Armory on the project site, at the intersection of West Kingsbridge Road and Reservoir Avenue. The proposed project also would reconfigure the existing Barnhill Triangle at the intersection of West Kingsbridge Road and Reservoir Avenue. Within that “greenstreet” traffic island, some of the existing trees would be removed and replaced in kind. In addition, a portion of the south side of West 195th Street abutting the project block would be demapped to provide additional land area for potential City redevelopment of property on the north side of the Armory at a future date. This chapter considers the proposed project’s potential impacts on land use, zoning, and public land use policies.

To determine existing conditions and assess the potential for project-related impacts, the primary land use study area has been defined as being within a ¼-mile radius of the project site, where the proposed project has the greatest potential to affect land use trends. This analysis also considers a larger, ½-mile secondary study area where indirect effects on land use trends have the potential to occur. Various sources were used to comprehensively analyze land use, zoning, and public policy characteristics of the study area, including field surveys and land use and zoning maps.

Overall, the proposed project would not have any significant adverse impacts on land use, zoning, or public policy. The proposed project would introduce new uses to a site that has been substantially vacant and underutilized for many years; however, these new uses would be compatible with and complementary to the mixed-use nature of the surrounding neighborhood and would generally promote public policy goals.

B. BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT HISTORY¹

The Kingsbridge Armory—also known as the Eighth Regiment Armory—was built between 1912 and 1917 on the site of the proposed eastern basin of the Jerome Park Reservoir.² Although excavation had begun for the eastern basin in the early 1900s, the New York State Legislature authorized the site for a National Guard armory in 1911. Prior to the construction of the

¹ Information derived from the Jerome Park Reservoir State/National Register Designation Report, 2000.

² Information from the National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, 1982.

Kingsbridge Armory, the Eighth Coastal Artillery District (formerly the Eighth Regiment of Manhattan) had been housed in an armory on Park Avenue in Manhattan since 1889 and shared its drill shed with Squadron A. Within a few years, the shared armory became inadequate for both uses, and the Armory Board authorized the Eighth to build a new armory. The Bronx site was selected because it was more affordable than other Manhattan sites. The site comprised sixty lots and the lower portion of the Jerome Park Reservoir site.¹

Over the course of the 20th century the Armory's drill hall hosted numerous public events, particularly in the early 1950s before the completion of the Coliseum at Columbus Circle. These events included radio broadcasts, bicycle races, track and tennis events, auto, boat, flower and dog shows, and stockholder meetings. In the early 1980s, the Armory was also used as a shelter for the homeless. As part of a nationwide program of military cutbacks, the Eighth Regiment departed the Armory in 1994, and the City of New York took control of the Armory on April 11, 1996. During the 1990s, a plan was developed to utilize the building for a retail and sports complex, but this effort never moved past the planning stage. Other proposed uses for the structure have included a public school. In 2007, EDC issued a Request for Proposals for the sale and redevelopment of the landmark for commercial and community facility uses, taking into account extensive community input. In the spring of 2008, Related was selected by EDC as the designated developer for the proposed project.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

LAND USE

PROJECT SITE

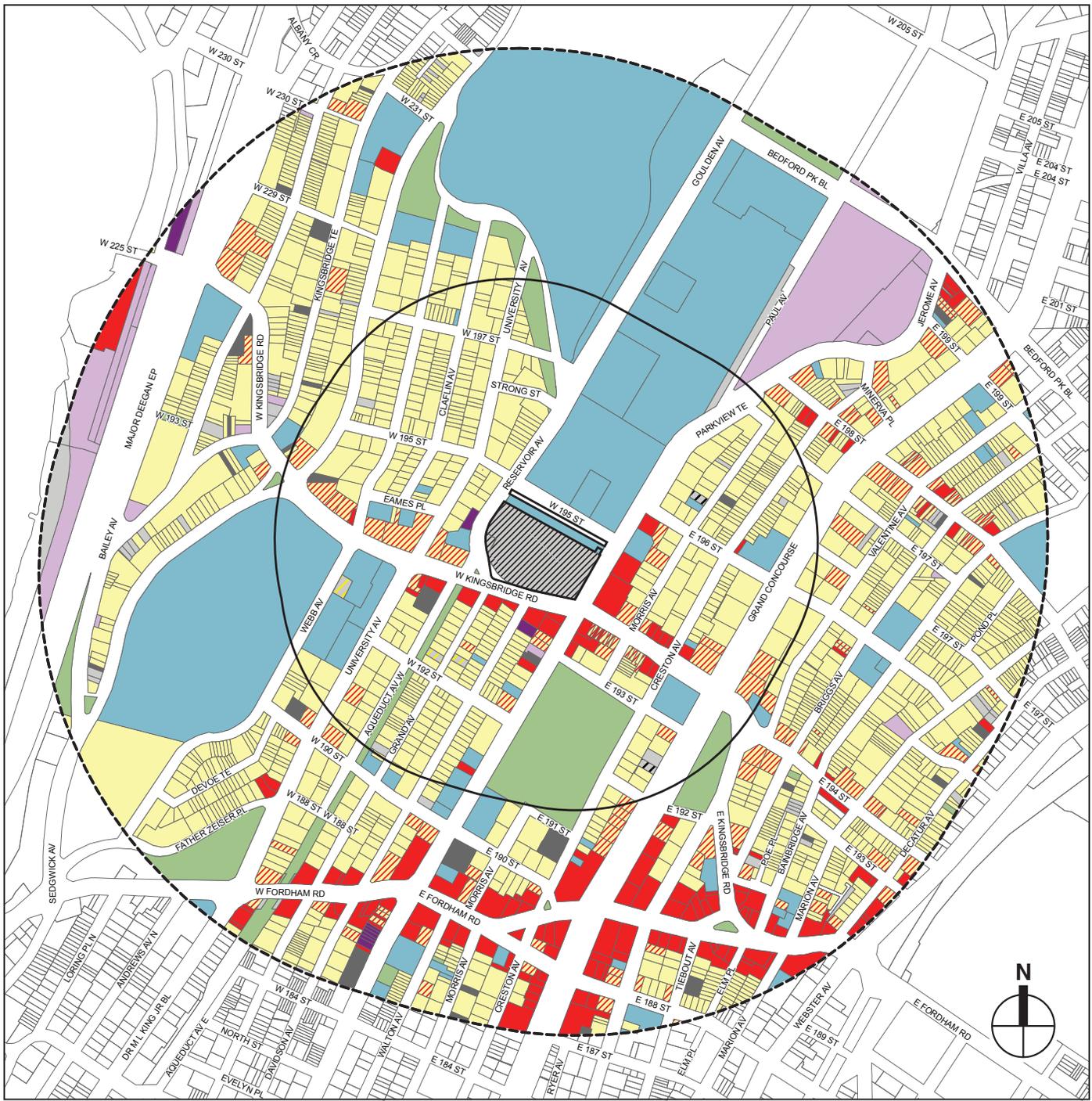
The project site is located on an irregularly-shaped block bounded by West 195th Street to the north, Reservoir Avenue to the west, West Kingsbridge Road to the south, and Jerome Avenue to the east (see **Figure 2-1**). The project site occupies Block 3247, Lot 10 and a portion of Lot 2 and includes the largely vacant Armory building, as well as a portion of Reservoir Avenue and West 195th Street. A small portion of the Armory building is currently dedicated to parking for graffiti removal trucks. In addition to the Armory, the project site includes small landscaped areas south and west of the Armory building, a small landscaped area with plantings and some seating on the south side of the Armory near its headhouse. The two buildings adjacent to the Armory's north façade are excluded from the project site and are not part of the development proposal, as indicated on **Figure 2-1**. These two buildings are modern additions to the Armory property that are currently being used by the National Guard for military recruiting and a garage.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

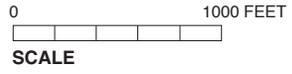
The primary ¼-mile land use study area is roughly bounded by East and West 197th Street to the north, the Grand Concourse to the east, Sedgwick Avenue to the west, and East and West 190th Street to the south (see **Figure 2-1**). Jerome Avenue is generally the dividing line between the "east" and "west" numbered streets.

North of West 195th Street across from the project site, the primary study area includes a large, institutional superblock bounded by Reservoir Avenue to the west and Jerome Avenue to the

¹ Nancy L. Todd. *New York's Historic Armories—An Illustrated History*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2006.



-  Project Site
-  Primary Study Area Boundary (1/4-Mile Perimeter)
-  Secondary Study Area Boundary (1/2-Mile Perimeter)
-  Residential
-  Residential with Commercial Below
-  Commercial and Office Buildings
-  Industrial and Manufacturing
-  Transportation and Utility
-  Public Facilities and Institutions
-  Open Space and Outdoor Recreation
-  Parking Facilities
-  Vacant Land
-  Vacant Building
-  Under Construction



THE SHOPS AT THE ARMORY

Land Use
Figure 2-1

east. This block contains Public School 86, Walton High School, Public School 340, and Lehman College. There are no publicly-accessible streets through the superblock until far north of the primary study area at 238th Boulevard/Bedford Park Boulevard West.

Northwest of the superblock is the 94-acre Jerome Park Reservoir, which is inaccessible to the public. The reservoir was built in 1906 as part of the New York City water supply system. Only a small southeast portion of the reservoir is within the primary study area.

The portion of the primary study area west of Reservoir Avenue and north of West Kingsbridge Road is largely residential, and is characterized by a mix of two- to three-story attached townhouses and detached homes, as well as five- to six-story, multi-unit apartment buildings. There is an auto-body shop on the west side of Reservoir Avenue between West Kingsbridge Road and West 195th Street, directly across from the project site. Aside from the institutional uses identified above, there are also several institutional uses in this part of the primary study area, including Bethel Community Church at 2716 Claflin Avenue; Fordham Manor Dutch Reformed Church at 2711 Reservoir Avenue (directly west of the project site across Reservoir Avenue); the Jerome Park branch of the New York Public Library at 118 Eames Place; and Public School 307 at 124 Eames Place. This part of the primary study area also includes two daycare facilities: Adventure Daycare on West 195th Street between Webb and Claflin Avenues, and Jenny's Family Group Daycare on Claflin Avenue between West 195th and 197th Streets. There are also two open spaces in this area: the Strong Street Playground on Reservoir Avenue between Strong and West 197th Streets, and Washington's Walk (part of the larger Old Fort Park), on Reservoir Avenue between West 197th Street and the Jerome Park Reservoir. The Strong Street Playground contains play equipment and seating areas, while Washington's Walk is a narrow, grassy landscaped area with benches and a paved walkway.

The north side of West Kingsbridge Road, west of Reservoir Avenue, is characterized by six-story apartment buildings with ground floor, neighborhood retail, including beauty salons, restaurants, and supermarkets. These uses are generally found along East and West Kingsbridge Road throughout the primary study area, however, east of Reservoir Avenue they are often stand-alone commercial uses without residential above. Both the north and south sides of East and West Kingsbridge Road throughout the primary study area are highly commercial in character, and form a retail corridor serving the needs of the community.

The southwest portion of the primary study area, west of Aqueduct Avenue West and south of West Kingsbridge Road, is characterized by several large institutional uses. These include the James J. Peters Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center on the south side of West Kingsbridge Road between Webb and Sedgewick Avenues and extending beyond the primary study area to the south, as well as multiple buildings that form the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Campus of the Jewish Hospital Home and Hospital Lifecare System on the south side of West Kingsbridge Road between Webb and University Avenues. The Kittay House, a nursing home, is also located on the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Campus superblock. Other uses in this portion of the primary study area between University Avenue and Aqueduct Avenue West are primarily five- and six-story apartment buildings with ground-floor commercial uses on the south side of West Kingsbridge Road, east of the large institutional uses.

South of the project site across West Kingsbridge Road, the primary study area is generally characterized by two- to three-story attached and detached houses, and various smaller institutional uses, such as the Kingdom Hall Church at 2605 Jerome Avenue, the Young Men's Buddhist Association of America at 2611 Davidson Avenue, Monroe College at 2501 Jerome Avenue, and the University Nursing Home at 2505 Grand Avenue. A grassy area extends along

The Shops at the Armory DEIS

the east side of Aqueduct Avenue West along the route of the former Croton Aqueduct, and contains several benches. Several new residential buildings have been recently constructed in this portion of the primary study area, particularly along Grand Avenue. Most of the new construction is occupied, but there are two small-scale residential buildings currently under construction along Grand Avenue between West Kingsbridge Road and West 192nd Street.

Continuing east through the primary study area, Jerome Avenue is divided by the columns of the elevated tracks of the No. 4 train. As mentioned above, Jerome Avenue divides Kingsbridge Road into west and east sections. The west side of Jerome Avenue south of West Kingsbridge Road is characterized by a mix of commercial, residential, and institutional uses and larger, six-story residential apartment buildings (with and without ground floor retail), while the east side of Jerome Avenue south of East Kingsbridge Avenue is dominated by St. James Park and the St. James Recreation Center. St. James Park includes tennis, handball, and basketball courts, playgrounds, comfort stations, and a dog run, while the recreation center includes fitness equipment, classrooms, an auditorium, and other community amenities. St. James Church, immediately south of St. James Park on Jerome Avenue, is also within the primary study area. Also south of East Kingsbridge Road, in the southeast portion of the primary study area at 2641 Grand Concourse, is Public School 246. Just beyond the primary study area to the south, Poe Park is located on the east side of the Grand Concourse between East Kingsbridge Road and East 192nd Street. Poe Park contains play equipment, seating areas, and the historic cottage of Edgar Allen Poe.

The east side of Jerome Avenue, north of St. James Park between East 193rd and 196th Streets, is largely commercial, and north of East 196th Street is characterized by larger, six-story apartment buildings. In general, this northeast portion of the primary study area—which is roughly bounded by the Grand Concourse to the east—contains fewer single-family homes and more five- and six-story apartment buildings. A number of these apartment buildings have ground-floor retail. The northeast portion of the primary study area includes several other institutional uses: the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, just off of the Grand Concourse at 701 East Kingsbridge Road; the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition at 103 East 196th Street; the New Life Outreach International Church at 2757 Morris Avenue; and the Concord House at the northwest corner of the Grand Concourse and East 196th Street, a residential development under the jurisdiction of the Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation and the University Heights Housing Program. The Grand Concourse is generally a highly-trafficked thoroughfare, with eight lanes of north-south traffic. Portions of the Grand Concourse right-of-way in the primary study area are currently undergoing roadway improvements, resulting in temporary lane closures throughout the primary study area.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

The secondary ½-mile land use study area is roughly bounded by Bedford Park Boulevard to the north, the Major Deegan Expressway to the west, 184th Street to the south, and Webster Avenue to the east.

The northwestern portion of the secondary study area includes a residential neighborhood with a combination of two- to three-story homes and five- to six-story apartment buildings, as well as a larger portion of the Jerome Reservoir and several institutional uses. Panning east, the secondary study area includes a primarily academic area containing the entirety of Lehman College, as well as a train yard under the jurisdiction of New York City Transit. There is also a small portion of Harris Park, bounded by Bedford Park Boulevard, Goulden Avenue, Paul Avenue, and West

205th Street within the secondary study area. The northeastern portion of the secondary study area contains a residential neighborhood characterized by taller apartment buildings along the Grand Concourse and mostly two- to three-story homes east of the Grand Concourse with some five- to six-story apartment buildings.

The southwestern portion of the secondary study area encompasses the entirety of the James J. Peters Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, as well as a large portion of Devoe Park, which is bounded by West Fordham Road, University Avenue, Father Zeiser Place, and Sedgwick Avenue. There is also a primarily low-rise residential neighborhood in this portion of the secondary study area, with the exception of a few tall residential buildings, including a 14-story residential building immediately south of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center and a 20-story residential building located along the Major Deegan Expressway near Bailey Avenue. To the east, the secondary study area includes the heavily trafficked commercial corridor along Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse.

ZONING

PROJECT SITE

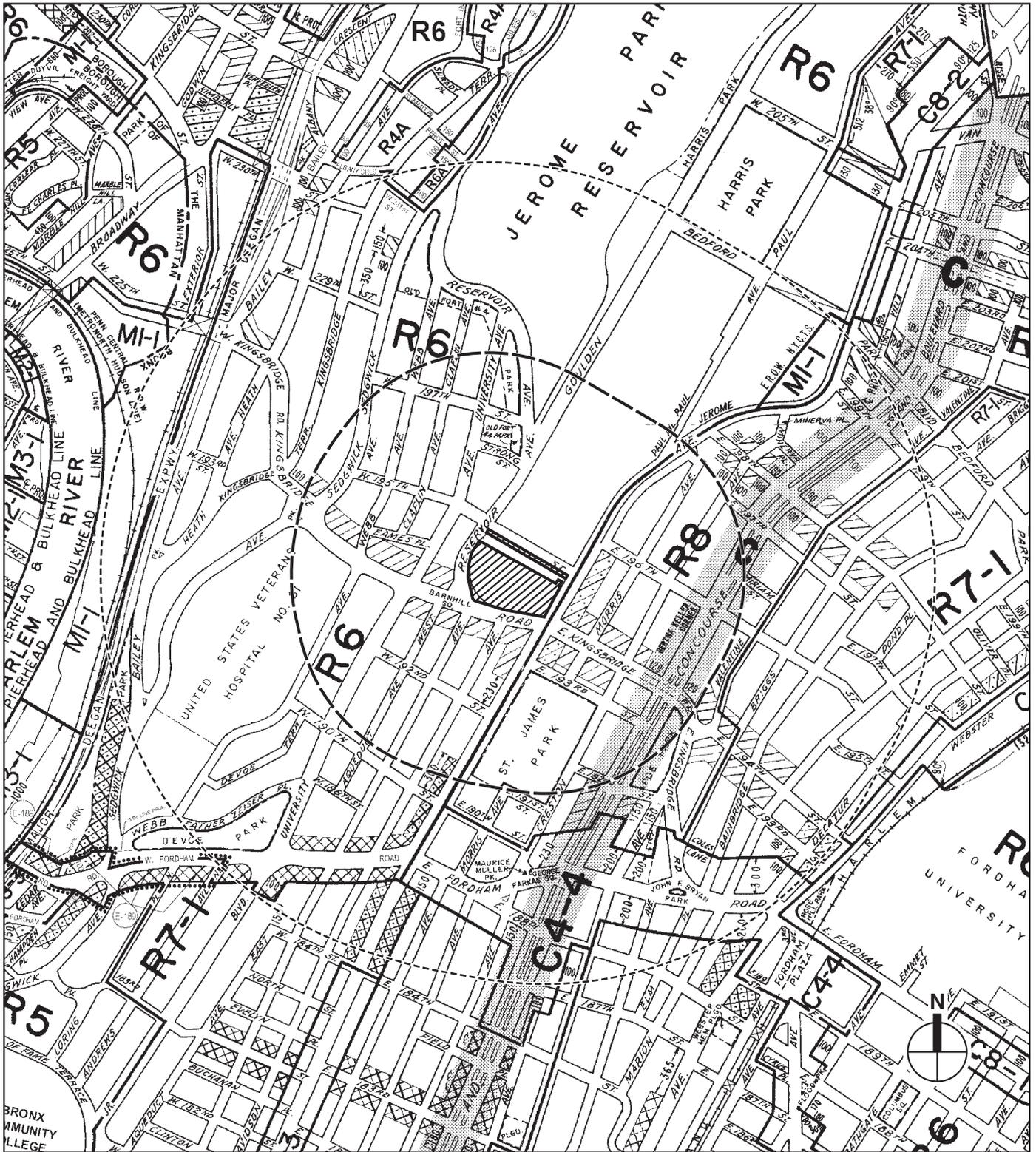
The project site is in an R6 residential zoning district that covers a large part of both the primary and the secondary study areas (see **Figure 2-2**). R6 residential districts encourage small apartment buildings built on small zoning lots and tall, narrow buildings set back from the street on larger lots under height factor regulations. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) in R6 districts ranges from 0.78 to 2.43. In R6 districts, off-street parking is required for 70 percent of the building's dwelling units, though this requirement can be waived if five or fewer spaces would be required. Residential buildings can also be developed under the Quality Housing program regulations to build lower, high lot coverage buildings that reflect the traditional neighborhood streetscape. The maximum FAR for community facilities in R6 zoning districts is generally 4.80. Commercial uses are not permitted in R6 districts, unless there is a commercial overlay.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

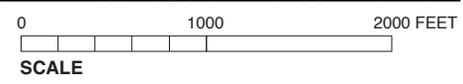
Additional zoning districts located within the primary, ¼-mile study area include an R8 residential district and several types of commercial overlays, including C1-3, C2-3, and C2-4.

R8 is the highest density residential district mapped in the Bronx with an FAR range of 0.94 to 6.02, and apartment houses in R8 districts can range from mid-rise, eight- to ten-story buildings to much taller, narrower buildings set back from the street on large zoning lots. Much like in R6 districts, buildings in R8 districts can be developed either under height factor regulations or optional Quality Housing regulations to reflect the traditional neighborhood streetscape. Within the primary study area, R8 districts are mapped to the east of Jerome Avenue. It should be noted that apartment buildings within this R8 zone in the primary study area are mostly six stories. There are also several streets characterized by single-family attached and detached houses within this zoning district. The maximum FAR for community facilities in R8 zoning districts is generally 6.50. Commercial uses are not permitted in R8 districts, unless there is a commercial overlay.

C1 and C2 commercial overlays are mapped along streets that serve the local retail needs of the surrounding residential neighborhood. Within the primary study area, they are found along East and West Kingsbridge Road, including West Kingsbridge Road across from—and east and west



-  Project Site
-  Primary Study Area Boundary (1/4-Mile Perimeter)
-  Secondary Study Area Boundary (1/2-Mile Perimeter)
-  Zoning District Boundary
-  C1-3 Overlay
-  C1-4 Overlay
-  C2-3 Overlay
-  C2-4 Overlay
-  Special Purpose District



THE SHOPS AT THE ARMORY

Zoning Figure 2-2

of—the project site, and along Jerome Avenue, directly across from the project site. Typical retail uses in these overlay districts include grocery stores, restaurants, beauty parlors, and other businesses that cater to the immediately surrounding neighborhood. C2 districts permit a slightly wider range of uses, such as funeral parlors and repair services, than C1 districts. In mixed residential and commercial buildings, commercial uses are limited to one or two floors and must always be located below the residential use. The maximum FAR of C1-3 commercial overlays in R6 through R10 districts is 2.0. C2-3 and C2-4 have the same maximum FAR guidelines as C1-3 overlays.

The eastern portion of the primary study area is located within the Special Grand Concourse Preservation District. This special district was established to promote and protect public health, safety, general welfare, and amenities in the area along the Grand Concourse. The district extends 100 feet from the street line of the Grand Concourse (aside for a few locations where it extends slightly further) between East Mosholu Parkway South to the north and roughly East 151st Street to the south. All C4 districts are excluded from the Special Grand Concourse District.

The general goals of this district include: protecting the existing scale and form of development and the traditional residential character of the Grand Concourse; encouraging new development which is in keeping with the scale and character of the area; preserving and enhancing the residential character of the area through the limitation of ground floor retail and commercial uses to specified locations; regulating the locations of retail and commercial signage; and promoting the most desirable use of land in the area to conserve the value of land and buildings.

SECONDARY STUDY AREA

Additional zoning districts within the secondary study area include R7-1 residential districts, a small portion of an R6A residential district, a C4-4 commercial district, C1-4, C2-4, C1-3, and C2-3 commercial overlays, and M1-1 manufacturing districts.

R7-1 residential districts are medium-density apartment districts where, much like the R6 and R8 districts described above, buildings can be developed either under height factor regulations or optional Quality Housing regulations to reflect the traditional neighborhood streetscape. The maximum allowable FAR in R7-1 districts ranges from 0.87 to 3.44, and commercial uses are not permitted in R8 districts unless there is a commercial overlay. The maximum allowable FAR for community facilities in R7-1 districts is 4.8. In R7-1 districts, off-street parking is required for 60 percent of dwelling units; this required can be waived if five or fewer spaces are required. Within the secondary study area, R7-1 districts are generally found east of Valentine Avenue and south of Fordham Road.

R6A residential districts require buildings to be built under the Quality Housing Option, which typically produce six- to seven-story buildings with high lot coverage. The maximum allowable FAR in R6A districts is 3.0. Off-street parking is required for 50 percent of the dwelling units, (this is waived if five or fewer spaces are required,) but cannot be located in front of the building. The maximum FAR for community facilities in R6A districts is 3.0 and commercial uses are not permitted. There is a small portion of an R6A district in the northwestern portion of the secondary study area, at West 231st Street and Sedgewick Avenue.

C4 commercial districts are mapped in regional commercial centers located outside of central business districts, and generally serve a larger area and create more traffic than neighborhood retail areas. The maximum commercial FAR in C4-4 districts is 3.4, and the residential district

equivalent is R7, with a maximum residential FAR range of 0.87 to 3.44. There is a C4-4 district within the southeastern portion of the secondary study area, generally centered around Fordham Road east of Jerome Avenue.

M1 manufacturing districts are often buffers between M2 or M3 districts and adjacent residential or commercial districts. They typically include light industrial uses, and have more stringent performance standards than M2 and M3 districts. Offices and most retail uses are also permitted. The maximum allowable FAR in M1-1 districts is 1.0 and parking is required. Residential uses are not permitted in M1-1 districts. There is an M1-1 district in the western portion of the secondary study area, west of the Major Deegan Expressway, as well as a small M1-1 district in the northeastern portion of the secondary study area on Jerome Avenue.

C1-3, C2-3, and C2-4 commercial overlays are described above. C1-4 commercial overlays have a maximum FAR of 1.0 within R1 through R5 residential districts, and an FAR of 2.0 within R6 through R10 residential districts. Within the secondary study area, C1-3 overlays are found along parts of East 194th Street, East 198th Street, and West Kingsbridge Road. There is a C2-3 overlay on parts of Decatur Avenue along the eastern boundary of the study area. C1-4 overlays are found along parts of West Fordham Road, and C2-4 overlays are found along parts of Jerome Avenue.

PUBLIC POLICY

As described above, the eastern portion of the primary study area is located within the Special Grand Concourse Preservation District, as is a portion of the larger, secondary study area. There are no other public policies applicable to the study areas.

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

LAND USE

PROJECT SITE

In the future without the proposed project, the project site is assumed to remain occupied by a largely vacant building.

PRIMARY STUDY AREA

As shown in **Table 2-1** and **Figure 2-3**, there are three multi-unit development projects in the study area that are expected to be completed by the 2013 build year.

Table 2-1
Projects in the Study Area Expected to be Completed by 2013

Ref. No	Developer/ Owner	Address	Development Proposal	Build Year
1	SOBO Development LLC	2763 Morris Avenue	New building: house of worship in cellar and 1st floor, 72 dwelling units above	est. 2010
2	Geel Community Service Inc.	2516 Grand Avenue	New building: 57 non-profit dwelling units	est. 2010
3	Jewish Home and Hospital	2552 Webb Avenue	New building: 72 dwelling units	est. 2010
Sources: NYC Department of Buildings' <i>Buildings Information System (BIS)</i> , accessed July and September 2008; AKRF site visits, July and September 2008.				

At 2763 Morris Avenue, a new building with 72 residential units is planned, with a house of worship in the cellar and on the first floor. A new building with 57 dwelling units is planned at 2516 Grand Avenue and is expected to be completed by 2010. A new building with 72 dwelling units is currently under construction at 2552 Webb Avenue. There are also several smaller developments and conversions under construction within the study area involving the addition of one to three units to existing buildings. This type of development is taking place largely to the south of the project site, in the southern portion of the primary study area.

Additional development projects may be constructed in the secondary study area by the proposed project's build year, however, due to their distance from the project site, these developments are not considered in this analysis.

ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY

Two potential rezonings are currently under consideration by the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP), neither of which falls within the primary or secondary land use study areas. The first involves the two-mile stretch of Webster Avenue from Fordham Road to Gun Hill Road. Webster Avenue is currently zoned C8, and DCP is considering rezoning this area to districts that would support residential as well as commercial uses, in order to be more cohesive with the surrounding neighborhood. DCP is also considering the rezoning of Third Avenue between the Cross Bronx Expressway and Fordham Road. This would be an upzoning from the current C8 and M1 zoning districts to districts that support residential and higher-density office uses. Projected development sites for the two rezonings have not yet been identified. While the rezonings may be approved prior to 2013, it is not expected that any induced development would be completed until after the proposed project's build year.

E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project would redevelop the Kingsbridge Armory, a historic landmark, with approximately 605,370 square feet of new uses, including approximately: 377,235 square feet of retail and restaurant space (both neighborhood and destination retail); 57,485 square feet of entertainment uses (a cinema); 33,240 square feet of fitness club space, and 27,000 square feet of community facilities. In addition, approximately 400 accessory parking spaces would be provided in the Armory's basement levels. A small portion of Reservoir Avenue would be demapped, and a new approximately 30,000-square-foot public open space would be developed adjacent to the Armory on the project site, at the intersection of West Kingsbridge Road and Reservoir Avenue. The proposed project would also reconfigure the existing Barnhill Triangle at the intersection of West Kingsbridge Road and Reservoir Avenue. Within that "greenstreet" traffic island, some of the existing trees would be removed and replaced. A portion of the south side of West 195th Street between Jerome and Reservoir Avenues would be demapped to provide additional land area for potential City redevelopment of property on the north side of the Armory at a future date.

Consideration has been given to the independent development of a new public school on the northern portion of the project block fronting West 195th Street. Such a development proposal, if deemed necessary by the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA), would be an independent initiative requiring a discretionary action separate from the proposed project. This area of the block is outside the current project site and is not part of the proposed project. Therefore, development of the proposed Kingsbridge Armory retail project does not preclude the future development of this area for school use.

LAND USE

While the proposed project would dramatically alter the land use on the project site by redeveloping the substantially vacant Armory with retail, restaurant, entertainment, fitness club, accessory parking, and community facility uses, the new uses would be compatible with and complementary to surrounding land uses. The Armory has been underutilized for more than a decade, and its redevelopment would take advantage of its location on West Kingsbridge Road, a busy thoroughfare, and direct proximity to a No. 4 train station. The redevelopment of the building would result in the renovation of a historic landmark. The proposed demapping of a portion of Reservoir Avenue would allow for the creation of a new approximately 30,000-square-foot open space that could be utilized by residents from the surrounding communities and visitors to the area. The proposed project would also alter the landscaped area near the Armory's headhouse entrance.

The proposed project would be compatible with and complementary to existing primary and secondary study area land uses. Kingsbridge Road is already a busy commercial thoroughfare, and the retail and restaurant components of the proposed project would enhance this corridor. In addition, the study area is largely residential in nature, and residents would benefit from the new cinema, fitness center, and community facility uses on the project site. Employees at the large institutional uses in the area would also benefit from the redevelopment project, as the project would provide more shopping and entertainment options for after-work hours. In addition, new visitors to the area would be generated by the proposed redevelopment and would help to support the existing commercial uses in the area.

ZONING

The proposed project would require a zoning map amendment to rezone the project site from R6 to C4-4; and, a change to the City Map to close a portion of Reservoir Avenue, for the creation of a new public open space, and to close a portion of the south side of West 195th Street between Jerome and Reservoir Avenues. The demapping of a portion of Reservoir Avenue for the creation of a publicly accessible open space would provide a valuable public amenity in an area currently underserved by open space resources. The closure of a portion of West 195th Street would provide additional land area for potential City redevelopment of the property on the north side of the Armory as an unrelated project, although no plans currently exist for such redevelopment.

Rezoning the project site to C4-4 would be compatible with the commercial overlays found on the blocks adjacent to the project site, and would facilitate the conversion of a largely vacant building into a community amenity by permitting the proposed commercial uses to be constructed on the site.

PUBLIC POLICY

In the fall of 2003, the City Planning Commission and the City Council approved the comprehensive plan submitted by Bronx Community Board 8 pursuant to Section 197a of the City Charter. While the project site itself is not located within the boundaries of this community board, the western portion of both the primary and secondary study areas does extend into this area. The plan's goals are to preserve the scale and character of the community district; strengthen protections for sensitive natural features; improve the appearance and economic vitality of local commercial districts; foster economic opportunities and access to cultural and educational facilities; create additional recreational resources; enhance existing parks and

The Shops at the Armory DEIS

promote the greening of major corridors; and preserve and educate the public about historic resources. The proposed project would be consistent with this plan by revitalizing a substantially vacant building in a local commercial district and converting it to commercial uses, as well as by creating a new approximately 30,000-square-foot publicly accessible open space.

The proposed project would also be consistent with the goals of PlaNYC 2030, which is a comprehensive strategy to ensure the long-term viability of the City. PlaNYC includes policies to address three key challenges the City faces over the next 20 years: 1) population growth; 2) aging infrastructure; and 3) global climate change. Specifically, the proposed project would be consistent with the plan's open space goals, which aim to (1) make existing sites available to more New Yorkers by opening schoolyards as public playgrounds or completing underdeveloped destination parks; (2) expand usable hours at existing sites by installing new lighting or providing more multi-purpose fields; and (3) re-imagine the public realm by creating or enhancing a public plaza in every community. The proposed project would be consistent with these goals by creating a new approximately 30,000-square-foot publicly accessible open space on the project site.

The proposed project would not entail any changes to public policy on the project site or in the primary or secondary study areas, and would be consistent with the public policies that currently govern the site and surrounding area. In addition, by providing a valuable amenity to the community and revitalizing a substantially vacant building, it would not be at variance with the Special Grand Concourse Preservation District found in the eastern portion of the study areas. *