

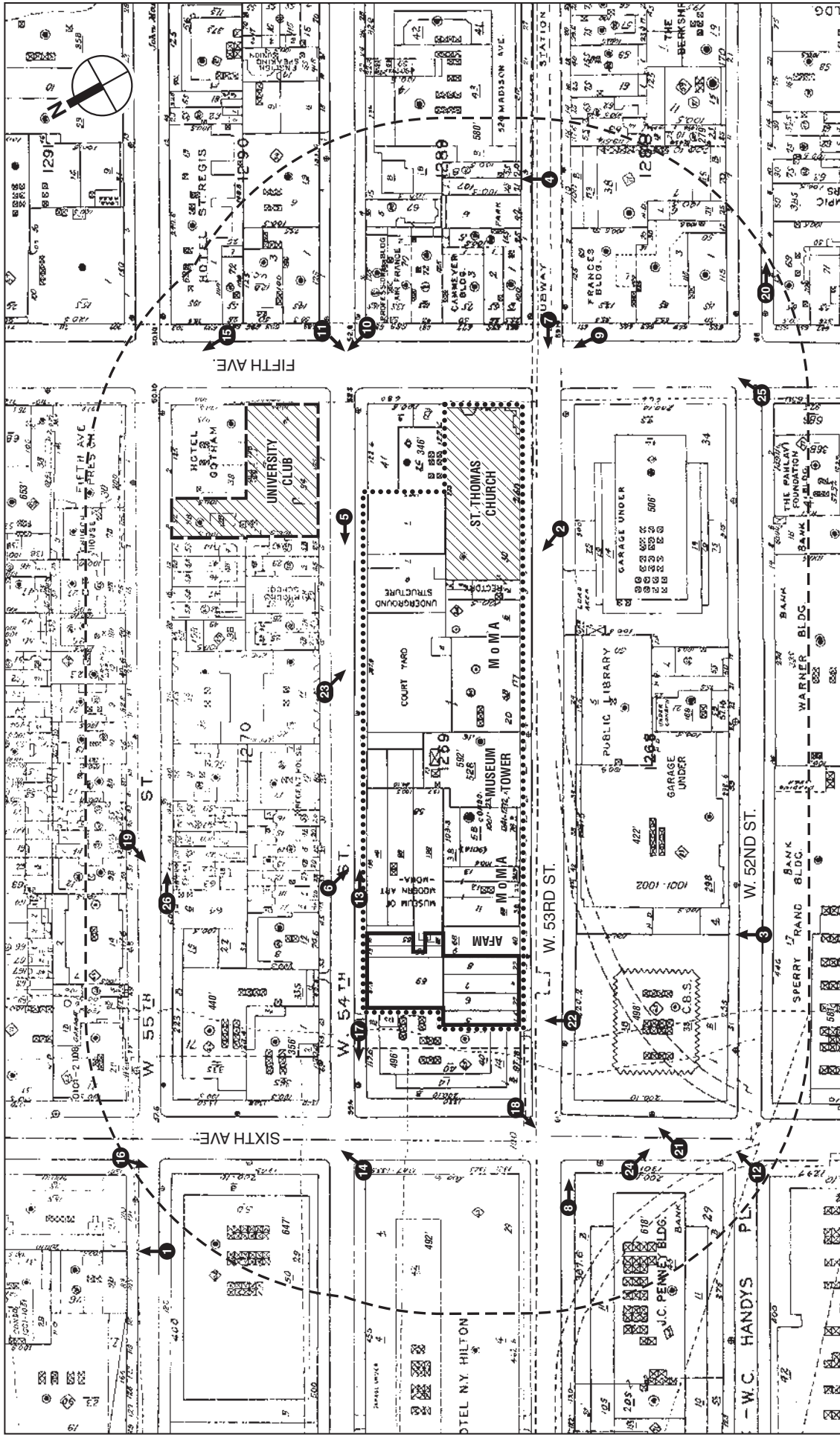
## A. INTRODUCTION

At a height of 1,250 feet, the proposed 53 West 53rd Street project would stand nearly as tall as the Empire State Building. It would also be unique in form, a spire-shaped tower, in Midtown Manhattan. This chapter considers the potential of this proposed project to affect the urban design and visual resources of the development site, the surrounding area, and other locations from which the proposed project would be visible. With the proposed actions, an approximately 786,562-square-foot (sf) building with a mix of residential, hotel (including a restaurant), and museum-related uses would be built on the currently vacant development site. Absent the proposed actions, an approximately 250,000-gross-square-foot (gsf), 285-foot-tall mixed-use building with office, museum, and retail uses (the Previously Approved Project) or a 508,013-gsf, 1,089-foot-tall building containing hotel, museum, and residential uses (the Expanded Development Scenario) will be built on the development site.

Urban design components and visual resources determine the “look” of a neighborhood: its physical appearance, including the size and shape of buildings; their arrangement on blocks; the street pattern; and noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. The following analysis addresses each of these characteristics for existing conditions, the future without the proposed project, in which either the Previously Approved Project or the Expanded Development Scenario will be built, and the future with the proposed project.

The development site is in the midblock on two relatively narrow streets adjacent to two tall structures, and thus would be less visible than a building of this height occupying an avenue site or a site on a wide street. Thus, the area where impacts would be most likely occur—the primary study area—has been defined as the area within approximately 400 feet of the development site. This primary study area is roughly bounded by West 55th Street to the north, the midblock east of Fifth Avenue to the east, West 52nd Street to the south, and the midblock west of Sixth Avenue to the west (see **Figure 8-1**). However, since the top of the proposed building would be visible from more distant locations, this analysis also assesses the potential for impacts within a secondary study area, which has been defined as the area within a ¼ mile of the development site. This secondary study area is bounded approximately by Central Park South, Park Avenue, 48th Street, and Seventh Avenue (see **Figure 8-2**). Although most more-distant, ground-level views would be blocked by intervening buildings, there would be some distant, public, ground-level views of the tower from Central Park. Those more distant views are also considered.

The analysis concludes that in comparison to either the Previously Approved Project or the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed project would not result in any significant adverse impacts to urban design and visual resources. The proposed uses of the development site would be different in the Previously Approved Project compared to the Expanded Development Scenario and the proposed project, but in each scenario they would be consistent with building uses that are prevalent in the surrounding area. However, the proposed project and the Expanded Development Scenario would be different in having residential uses in a high-rise building, as



200 FEET  
SCALE

Development Site Boundary  
Study Area Boundary (400-Foot Perimeter)  
Project Site  
Transfer Site

Landmark Site, subject to Special Permit  
Photograph View Direction and Reference Number  
Building Height

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

53 West 53rd Street



other tall buildings are generally commercial. The Previously Approved Project, the Expanded Development Scenario, and the proposed project would fully utilize the development site, reinforce the existing streetwalls of West 53rd and 54th Streets, and are expected to enliven those streets with additional pedestrian activity. Each also would comply with applicable streetwall regulations, which at this location require the maintenance of a consistent streetwall up to a height of 85 feet above the sidewalk. Neither the proposed project nor the Previously Approved Project or the Expanded Development Scenario would alter other urban design characteristics including topography of the study area, street pattern and hierarchy, block shapes, or natural features.

At approximately 1,250 feet, the proposed building would be 965 feet taller than the Previously Approved Project and approximately 161 feet taller than the Expanded Development Scenario building. There are already a number of tower structures in the 400-foot study area, including the Museum Tower directly to the east (approximately 592<sup>1</sup> feet tall), the 40-story building directly to the west (approximately 496 feet tall), the landmarked CBS Building across West 53rd Street (approximately 498 feet tall), and the New York Hilton Hotel across Sixth Avenue (approximately 492 feet tall). In addition, there are approximately 59 buildings taller than 400 feet in the ¼-mile study area and many of these are iconic skyscrapers. Of these buildings, 15 are 600 feet or more in height. The nearest buildings of 1,200 or more feet in height—the Empire State Building and the Bank of America—are beyond the ¼-mile study area. These buildings are not located in the midblock; however, it should be noted that in comparison to the buildings, the proposed building (as well as the previously-approved building and the Expanded Development Scenario building) would occupy a much smaller floorplate and thus would have a substantially smaller overall bulk.

In comparison to the Expanded Development Scenario building's tower, which would set back at several stages but maintain a mostly rectangular configuration, the proposed building's tower would be faceted and would taper to a narrow point. This tapering would lessen the tower's perceived bulk, particularly at the east and west elevations. The building would slope back on one side to yield views past the Museum Tower, and its northeast corner would be cut away within the C5-P zoning district.

Both the Expanded Development Scenario building and the proposed building would be visible from more distant points; however, only the towers of the buildings would be visible in these locations, and they would be part of the overall skyline of high-rise buildings in Midtown Manhattan. The proposed building's anticipated cladding materials—glass and aluminum—would be consistent with those of the previously-approved building and the Expanded Development Scenario building, as well as those of other modern structures in the area. As part of the Restrictive Declaration, certain design elements, including cladding materials, will be required to be as shown on the ULURP drawings. The building's design, while modern, would not adversely affect the diverse mix of styles represented in this area of the city.

There are no visual resources located on the development site and, as the site is privately owned and not accessible to the public, there are no notable views from it. Therefore, the proposed

---

<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, all provided heights of existing buildings represent heights above curb. They were determined using models created by Fugro EarthData, Inc. EarthData's 3D models were constructed from aerial surveys, using photogrammetry and CAD modeling. They feature architectural massing, including parapets and rooftop mechanical structures, as well as topographically accurate ground features. They are accurate to within a meter both vertically and horizontally.

project would not have any adverse impacts to on-site visual resources or views from the development site to visual resources. Many sidewalk-level views in the 400-foot study area closest to the development site would be altered by the proposed project, as the height and unique tapered form of the proposed building with its decorative spire would be more prominent in surrounding views than those of the previously-approved building. The proposed building would become an important feature in sidewalk-level views west on West 54th Street across the MoMA sculpture garden area and in sidewalk-level views east and west on the south side of West 53rd Street. The proposed building would be noticeable from Sixth Avenue in the vicinity of West 53rd and 54th Streets, especially due to the CBS Building being set back from Sixth Avenue and West 52nd and 53rd Streets. Like the Expanded Development Scenario building, the proposed building would create a new backdrop to views of the CBS Building from this location. However, the anticipated reflective, transparent materials and style of the proposed building and the Expanded Development Scenario building would be clearly different from those of the CBS Building, and thus would allow this historic structure to retain its individual visual identity.

The proposed building, like the previously-approved building and the Expanded Development Scenario building, would be visible from West 52nd Street across the CBS Building plaza. It would be much taller and more slender (having smaller floor-plates) than the many large-scale tower buildings in the area, and it would be unique in its shape and different in its use from the office towers. Nevertheless, these changes would not have an adverse impact on urban design and visual resources. The change in these views between the Expanded Development Scenario and the proposed project would not be adverse. In comparison to the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed building would not obstruct any views to visual resources in the 400-foot study area. Further, the proposed project would be a new visual resource.

Within the ¼-mile study area, the proposed building, similar to the Expanded Development Scenario building, would be visible for long distances along the south sidewalk of 53rd Street and the north sidewalk of 54th Street. In these views, it would be one of many tall buildings framing the view corridors and would be viewed as part of the overall skyline of high-rise buildings in Midtown Manhattan. Nevertheless, it would be taller and slimmer, particularly in the higher reaches of its spire. Further, from views east on 53rd Street, the intervening Museum Tower would partially obscure views of the proposed building. From most other locations within the ¼-mile study area, the proposed building would be considerably less visible, or not visible at all, due to intervening buildings and distance, although the upper floors of the building could potentially be seen above shorter buildings, depending on the viewer's location and the height and bulk of intervening buildings. As with the Expanded Development Scenario building, it is likely that the proposed building would be visible from the northern portion of Grand Army Plaza, where it would appear in the background behind the 687-foot-tall Solow Building at 9 West 57th Street—a midblock building—and the 653-foot-tall building at 712 Fifth Avenue. From this location both its narrow, tapering façade and its more rectilinear north façade would be visible. The proposed building would also be visible from multiple locations in Central Park. Given its distance and its location behind many shorter but closer buildings, its height would be less apparent. Nevertheless, it would be the tallest of a number of tall buildings in the skyline in these views. Overall, the proposed building would create a new, visually unique addition to the skyline, but would not have any significant adverse impacts on surrounding views or visual resources.

## **B. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **DEVELOPMENT SITE**

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

The development site is currently paved and vacant. In recent years, the development site has seen several uses, ranging from a construction staging area, to museum exhibition staging, to storage of metal barricades, to queuing Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) visitors for Friday evenings, to temporary shows of weather-resistant artworks, such as the Home Delivery Exhibit. A large banner advertising an exhibit at MoMA is affixed to the side of the building forming the east side of the development site. Trees line the sidewalks around the development site, and street vendors often sell art, food, or other items.

#### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

There are no visual resources on the development site. As described above, the development site is a paved, vacant lot. There are no prominent or notable views from the development site to visual resources in the surrounding area.

### **PROJECT/TRANSFER SITES AND 400-FOOT STUDY AREA**

The discussion below focuses first on the primary study area's urban design—its basic layout and structures—and describes its visual resources. See **Figure 8-1** for a map of the 400-foot study area and **Figures 8-3** through **8-15** for views.

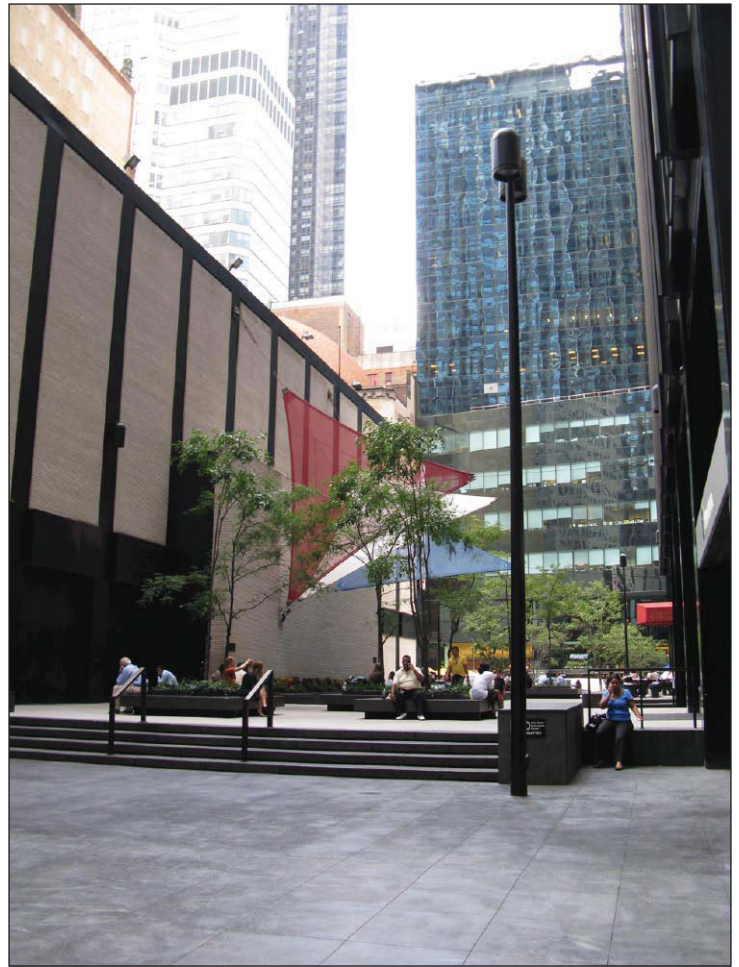
#### *URBAN DESIGN*

##### *Topography and Natural Features*

The 400-foot study area is generally flat, with a slight downward slope from West 52nd Street north to West 55th Street. Street trees are more prevalent on the side streets, although there are a few located along Fifth and Sixth Avenues. There are also street trees and other landscaping within the study area's public plazas, which are discussed below under "Streetscape." Other than the public plazas, the study area does not include any public open spaces or other natural features.

##### *Street Pattern, Street Hierarchy, and Block Form*

The 400-foot study area is part of the Manhattan street grid, with wide north-south avenues and narrow east-west streets creating typical rectangular city blocks. Fifth and Sixth Avenues are the major north-south streets in the study area, with Sixth Avenue carrying northbound traffic and Fifth Avenue carrying southbound traffic. Both avenues have bus lanes, and Sixth Avenue has some on-street parallel parking. The east-west streets are narrower, have on-street parallel parking, and carry one-way traffic. Most east-west streets in the study area also have moderate pedestrian traffic, with West 53rd Street pedestrian traffic being higher than average due to the presence of both MoMA and the American Folk Art Museum. Pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic is heaviest along the avenues.



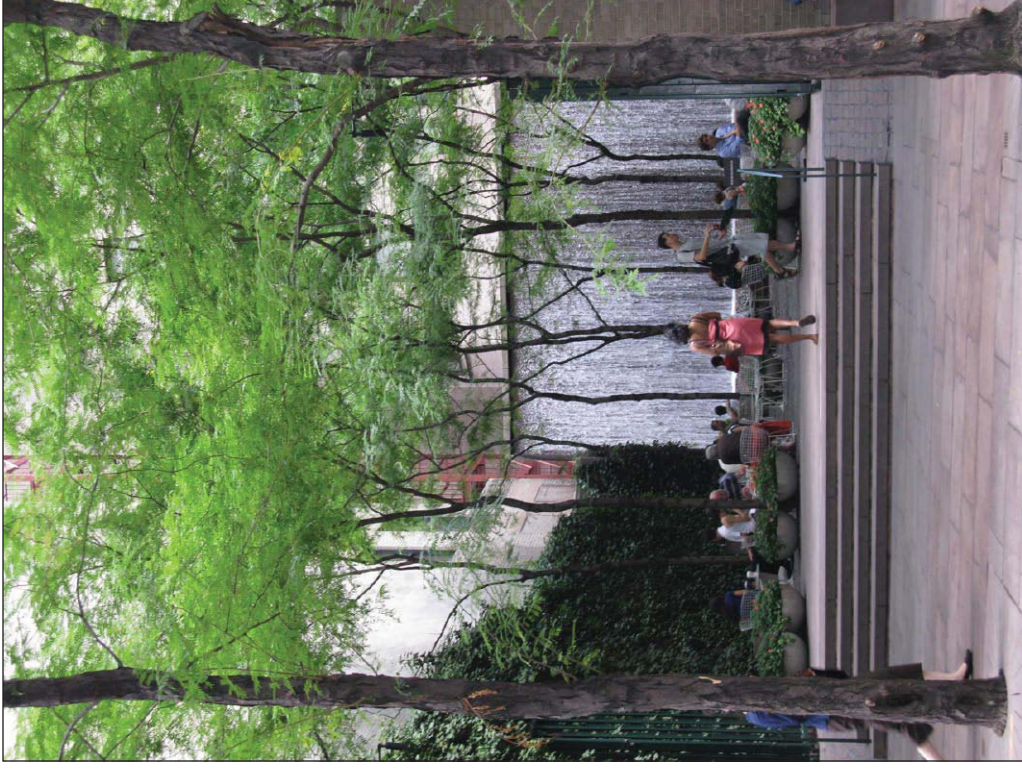
Public plaza on West 55th Street, looking north 1



West 53rd Street, view west from Fifth Avenue 2



Public plaza at CBS Building, view north 3



Paley Park 4





MoMA, view west from Fifth Avenue and West 54th Street 5



MoMA, view of sculpture garden facades from West 54th Street 6



Museum Tower, view west on West 53rd Street from Fifth Avenue 7



Museum Tower, view east on West 53rd Street from Sixth Avenue 8



St. Thomas Church, view north from Fifth Avenue 9



University Club, view north from Fifth Avenue 10



666 Fifth Avenue, view south along Fifth Avenue 11



CBS Building, view northeast from Sixth Avenue 12



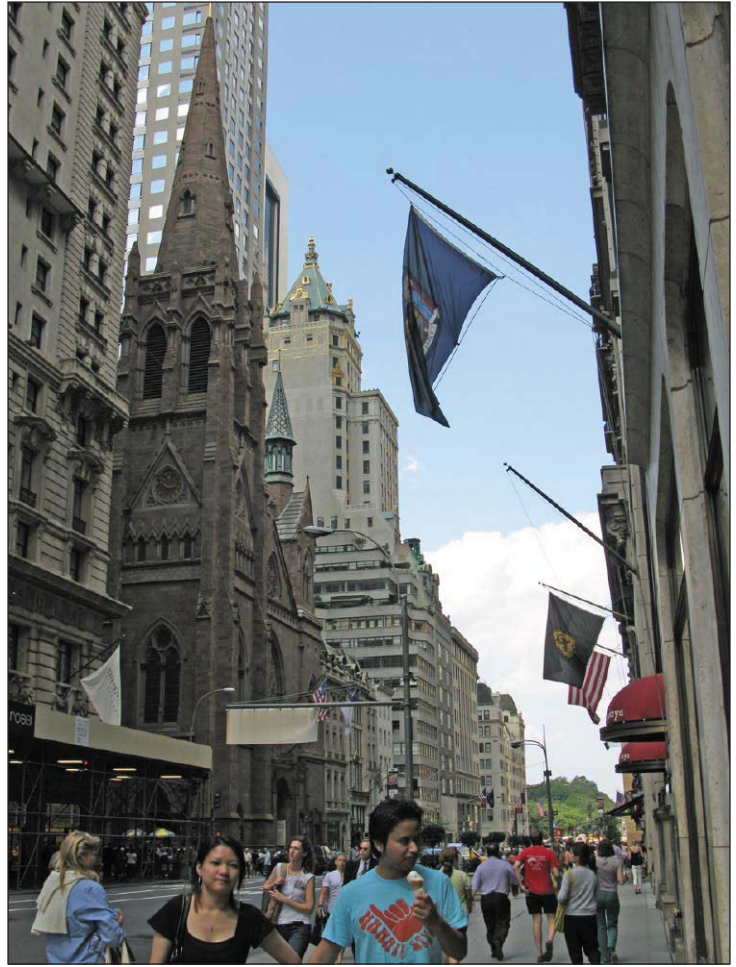
Rockefeller Apartments, view east on West 54th Street 13



Warwick Hotel, view from Sixth Avenue 14

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church,  
looking north on Fifth Avenue

15

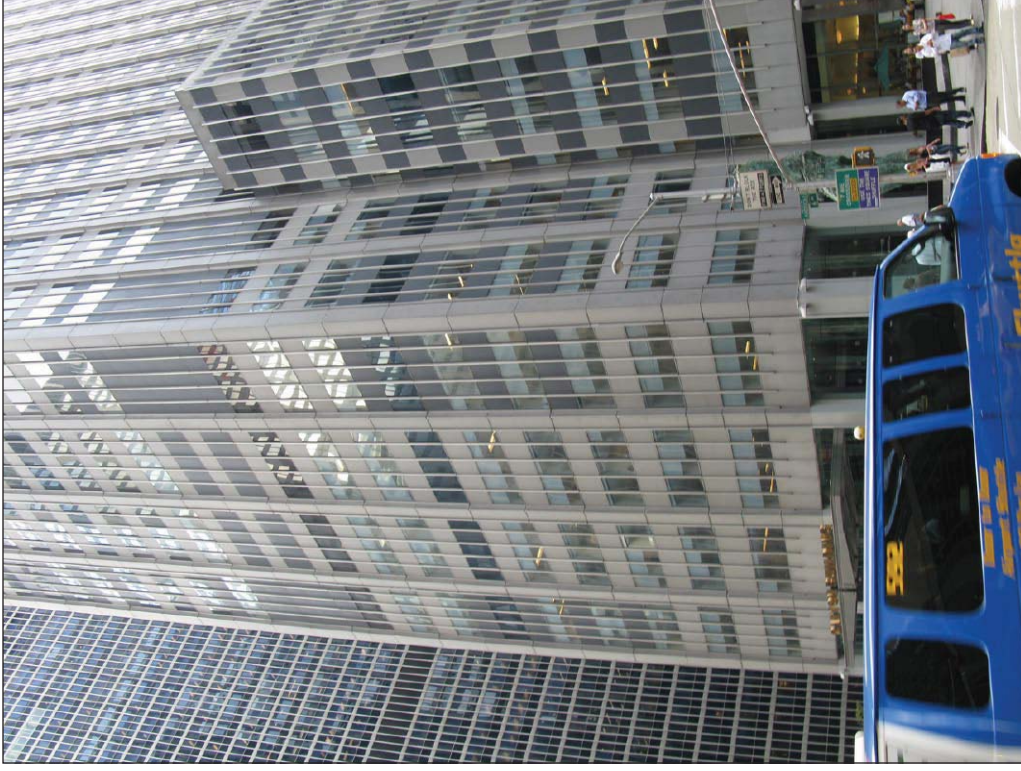


Former Burlington House (aka Alliance Capital Building), view of base and  
plaza from Sixth Avenue

16



New York Hilton Hotel, view west from West 54th Street 17



Former J.C. Penney Building (now Credit Lyonnais Building), view southwest from Sixth Avenue 18



South side of West 55th Street, looking west 19

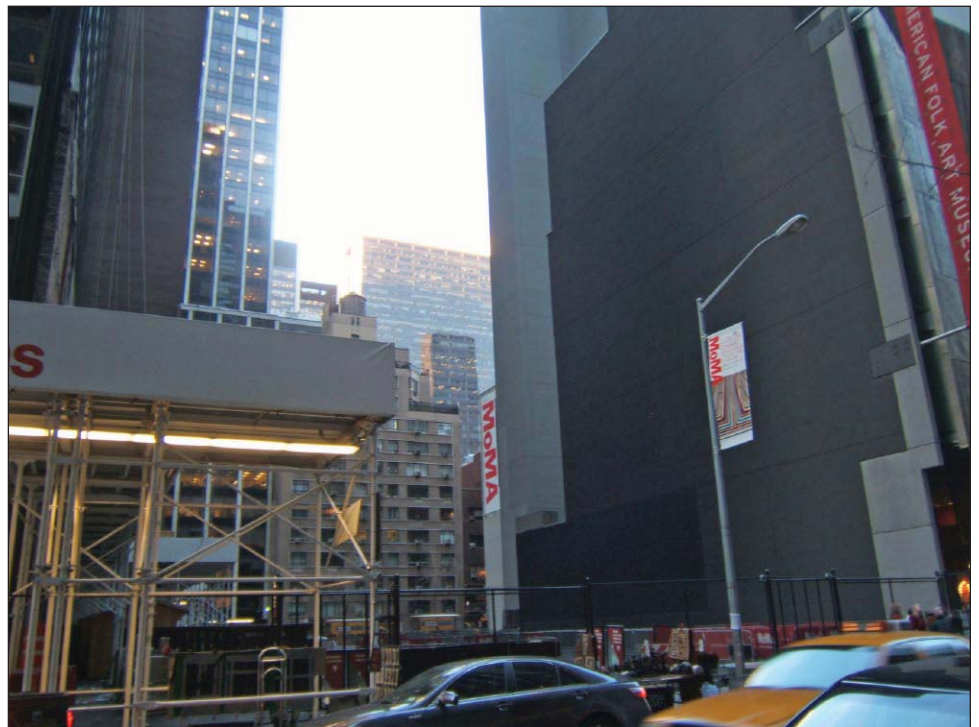


East 52nd Street, looking east from Fifth Avenue 20





View from Sixth Avenue and West 52nd Street to development site 21



View from CBS Building plaza to development site 22



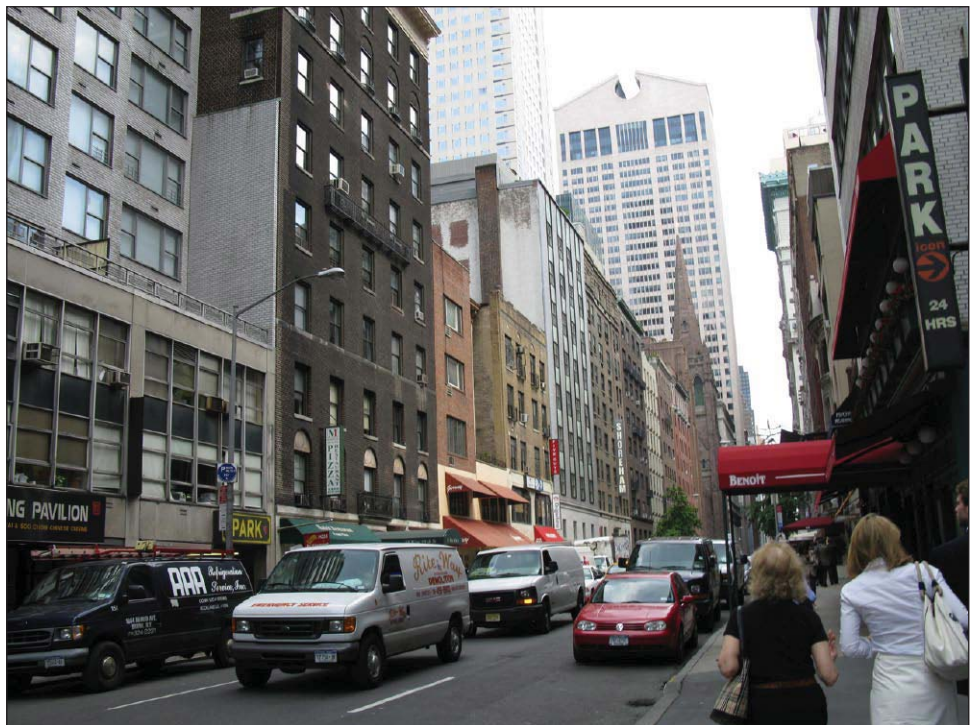
View south through MoMA sculpture garden,  
from West 54th Street **23**



View south on Sixth Avenue from West 52nd Street **24**



Looking north on Fifth Avenue toward Trump Tower 25



Looking east on West 55th Street from Sixth Avenue 26

*Streetscape*

Sidewalks on Fifth and Sixth Avenues are wide, while those on the east-west streets are generally narrower. The pedestrian area along Sixth Avenue is further enhanced by its many public plazas, which provide seating, sculpture, and fountains. Street furniture in the study area includes standard street signs, wire mesh garbage cans, pay telephones, modern glass and metal bus shelters, and mailboxes. Most of the street lamps in the area are the standard cobra head design; however, there are a few other unique models around modern high-rise buildings designed as part of their public plazas (see View 1 of **Figure 8-3**). Most of the residential buildings in the study area have ground-floor retail with awnings, projecting signage, or building-mounted signage. Through most of the study area, but along Fifth Avenue in particular, country flags are affixed to the sides of buildings. Entrances to the Fifth Avenue/53rd Street E and V lines subway station are noted with a green globe light and stairs at the northeast corner of Fifth Avenue and East 53rd Street, and by a modern metal canopy on the West 53rd Street façade of the building at 666 Fifth Avenue. There are a number of street food vendors in the area, particularly on the avenues, and other vendors selling art and other items on West 54th Street around the museums on the project block (see description below). There are banners affixed to the sides of the American Folk Art Museum and MoMA buildings, advertising their presence on the project block (see View 2 of **Figure 8-3**).

The streetwalls in the 400-foot study area are consistent along Fifth Avenue, West 55th Street, most of the north side of West 54th Street and the south side of West 52nd Street; however, they are less so in the western portion of the study area, where buildings are set back from the lot line and there are multiple public plazas. Along Sixth Avenue in particular, and the south side of West 53rd Street west of the project site, streetwalls are inconsistent. The project block's streetwalls are mostly strong, with the exception of the break caused by the development site and the setback at the 40-story building facing Sixth Avenue (discussed below).

The 400-foot study area includes a number of public plazas, which have been developed as part of high-rise commercial buildings. One such plaza is located to the east of the CBS Building, between West 52nd and 53rd Streets just south of the development site. The plaza, which extends through the block, contains large sculptures, stone benches, trees, and flowers (see View 3 of **Figure 8-4**). The 38-story Harper & Row Building, at 10 East 53rd Street, provides a covered, below-grade passageway through to East 52nd Street. On the north side of East 53rd Street east of Fifth Avenue is the well-known Paley Park (also known as Samuel Paley Plaza). Paley Park is an enclosed public space with ivy-covered side walls and a 20-foot-high waterfall covering its rear wall (see View 4 of **Figure 8-4**). This public space also includes chair and tables, a small café stand, and tall locust trees that create a high canopy overhead. Other public plaza components are noted below with the discussion of their buildings.

*Building Uses, Bulk, and Arrangements*

Most buildings in the 400-foot study area are commercial, institutional, or residential with ground-floor retail. In general, most buildings are built to the lot line and occupy their full site, but some of the larger, modern commercial buildings in the area are set back behind public plazas.

In addition to the development site, the project site includes the American Folk Art Museum (AFAM); the MoMA complex, which occupies most of the midblock; a residential high-rise building (the Museum Tower); and St. Thomas Church, at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 53rd Street. The project's transfer site also contains the University Club.

The AFAM building is 85 feet tall, clad in white bronze alloy panels that are faceted in three large planes. The building, designed by Tod Williams and Billie Tsien and completed in 2001, fully occupies its lot and is built to the lot line on West 53rd Street. The MoMA complex incorporates several buildings that vary in height and design. These include: the 1939 building designed by Goodwin and Stone at 11 West 53rd Street, a 5-story light-colored marble section with horizontal bands of opaque and transparent windows and a recessed entrance (see View 2 of **Figure 8-3**); the Philip Johnson wing at 21 West 53rd Street from 1953, a 6-story section consisting of a black metal grid with long vertical panels of windows; and the 2004 expansion by Yoshia Taniguchi, which includes a through-block, 6-story building with entrances on West 53rd and 54th Streets, and an 8-story education and research building with an entrance on West 54th Street (see View 5 of **Figure 8-5**).

Along West 54th Street, the MoMA complex is clad in panels of dark-colored masonry and glass curtain wall up to a height of approximately 82 feet and with aluminum panels above the setback, which rises to approximately 110 feet. There are also several truck loading docks within the western portion of the complex on West 54th Street. The sculpture garden is enclosed by a corrugated fence bookended by two metal gates with narrow horizontal slats, which provide breaks in the wall and allow for views into the garden from the sidewalks of West 54th Street. The sculpture garden is an outdoor gallery containing large sculptures, tall trees, tables and chairs, and is partially sunken below street level. For MoMA's "Summergarden" concert series, visitors are permitted to enter and leave the concerts in the sculpture garden from the two gates.

The design of the museum's two new sculpture garden-facing building facades creates a solid masonry box around a recessed, glass-clad curtain wall, which can be easily viewed along West 54th Street above the sculpture garden wall. In these street views, the masonry frame and transparency of the curtain walls vibrantly highlights the museum collections and visitors within (see View 6 of **Figure 8-5**). The smoky, semi-transparent glass curtain walls of the southern sculpture garden-facing buildings also add to the perceived transparency and openness of the museum in these views. All of the museum's sections create continuous streetwalls in the midblocks along West 53rd and 54th Streets and correspond to each other due to their modern design and use of glass and metal.

Cesar Pelli's Museum Tower from 1984, which is located in the middle of the MoMA complex, is 52 stories (592 feet) in height and is constructed of metal and reflective glass (see **Figure 8-6**). The Tower has recessed balconies, and its main entrance is on West 53rd Street. There are setbacks at the building's crown and the northwest corner is cut away. St. Thomas Church is located at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 53rd Street, and its parish house is just west of the church on West 53rd Street. St. Thomas Church is neo-Gothic in style and is clad in limestone, with an asymmetrically placed tower (see View 9 of **Figure 8-7**). Dark portals with pointed arches are located at street level on West 53rd Street. The University Club is located at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 54th Street. The Club is a 9-story structure with Italian Renaissance features, faced with pink Milford granite, and ornamented with the seals of various universities (see View 10 of **Figure 8-7**). It is divided into three horizontal sections, each defined by the tall arched windows that light the clubhouse's major rooms. The University Club and St. Thomas Church are landmarked structures and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, "Historic Resources."

The project block contains two buildings that are not part of the development site or the project site. The first of these is 1330 Sixth Avenue (the Financial Times Building), a 40-story commercial office building that occupies the east side of Sixth Avenue between West 53rd and

54th Streets. This office building is clad in dark metal and glass, is set back from the street, and its entrance is raised above street level behind a flight of steps (see View 5 of **Figure 8-5**). The building sets back once, above the 14th floor, before rising to its full height of 496 feet. Two large flagposts are located at the northwest corner of the building site. The second project block building is a 26-story (346-foot-tall) commercial office building at the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and West 54th Street. This building is clad in limestone and has little decoration (see View 9 of **Figure 8-7**). Its tower is set back after the 9th floor.

On the south side of West 53rd Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues there are several large-scale commercial buildings and one institutional building. 666 Fifth Avenue is located on the west side of Fifth Avenue between West 52nd and 53rd Streets and extends far into the midblock. Although it is a high-rise building (36 stories, 506 feet tall), it has more of a horizontal emphasis, since it has wide metal panels at each level and the tower is set back from the base at the 7th and 9th floors (see View 11 of **Figure 8-8**). The base of the building also contains an entrance to the subway system (discussed above), as well as large loading docks. Midblock is a 5-story, rectangular, light-colored building containing the Donnell Library Center. The Donnell Library Center is due to close shortly, but is anticipated to be rebuilt in the future as part of a larger development project (see discussion below). Adjacent to the library is the 31 West 52nd Street Building, a modern, 29-story (422-foot-tall) stone commercial structure, which has 4-story granite columns at its two main entrances. The corners of the building are cut out and the crown angles back from the façade planes and uses setbacks. As discussed above, a public plaza is located between this building and the CBS building on Sixth Avenue. The CBS Building is set far back from its adjacent streets (West 52nd and 53rd Streets and Sixth Avenue) on a sunken plaza. The 38-story, approximately 498-foot-tall building has triangular, dark gray, honed granite piers that rise without setback the entire height of the building (see View 12 of **Figure 8-8**). Dark, narrow windows are recessed between the granite piers. Some benches and planters are also located near the building. The CBS Building is a landmarked structure; for more detail see Chapter 7, “Historic Resources.”

On the north side of West 54th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, there are a number of smaller-scale, masonry-clad buildings in commercial and residential use. Some of the buildings have ground-floor retail. At the northwest corner of West 54th Street and Fifth Avenue is the University Club, discussed above. Its main entrance is on West 54th Street and is flanked by elaborately decorated columns that support an entablature. Adjacent to the University Club are five 4- and 5-story limestone and brick houses, now in commercial use. Built in the late 19th century, they are highly decorated with Renaissance, Colonial Revival, and Beaux Arts features and have slightly recessed attic windows (see Chapter 7, “Historic Resources”). In the midblock are two 12-story brick apartment buildings. The eastern of these is the Rockefeller Apartments, a through-block complex consisting of two separate buildings linked by a landscaped courtyard designed to allow sunlight to reach all apartments. The street facades of the linked buildings feature cylindrical bay windows (see View 13 of **Figure 8-9**). West of the Rockefeller Apartments are seven 4- and 5-story rowhouses, some of which are still in residential use and some of which are now commercial. These buildings vary in material—either limestone, brick, or both—style, and whether they are set back from the street. Some contain shops at the ground level. A 12-story, simply-detailed brick apartment building is located west of the rowhouses. A 36-story (356-foot-tall) brick hotel (the Warwick Hotel), and a portion of the 1350 Sixth Avenue building (discussed below) are located at the end of this block, with a portion of the 1350 Sixth Avenue building fronting on West 54th Street (see View 14 of **Figure 8-9**).

Fifth Avenue within the 400-foot study area consists of many late-19th and early-20th century buildings 6 to 20 stories tall, although some modern, high-rise (26- to 36-story) office buildings also have been constructed, particularly on the west side of Fifth Avenue. The older buildings are generally constructed of limestone and have many decorative features, while the modern high-rise buildings often have reflective metal and glass and very few decorative features. Most buildings also contain stores that have large windows at street level containing displays. Among the notable buildings along this street are 666 Fifth Avenue, discussed above, and the 19-story St. Regis Hotel at the southeast corner of West 55th Street. The St. Regis was designed in the Beaux Arts style, with ornate balconies and carvings. Another hotel—the Peninsula Hotel—is located at the opposite corner of West 55th Street on the west side of the avenue. The Peninsula Hotel is a 20-story limestone building that was designed to harmonize with the adjacent University Club as well as the St. Regis. The Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church is located at the northeast corner of West 55th Street. This Gothic-style stone church has a 286-foot-tall steeple and large stained glass windows (see View 15 of **Figure 8-10**).

Sixth Avenue within the 400-foot study area is characterized by large-scale, modern high-rise buildings that range in height from 21 to 50 stories. Most of these buildings extend far into the midblock and rise to their full height without setbacks, but a few have towers that are set back above a lower base. Some contain ground-floor stores with large windows. Almost all buildings are set back from the street; some have public plazas at their sides or facing onto the avenue.

The southeast corner of West 55th Street and Sixth Avenue is occupied by 1350 Sixth Avenue, a 33-story (440-foot-tall) modern white marble and glass building that is set back from the street and rises to its full height without setbacks. A portion of this commercial building extends through the midblock, with frontage on West 54th Street. A copy of the “LOVE” sculpture by Robert Indiana is installed in the setback area on Sixth Avenue; the original is on display in Center City, Philadelphia. Occupying the west side of Sixth Avenue between West 54th and 55th Streets at 1341-1357 Sixth Avenue is the former Burlington House (also known as the Alliance Capital Building), a 50-story, 647-foot-tall commercial building that rises flush without setbacks from its base. Set back from the lot line, the complex includes two large fountains on Sixth Avenue that have the shape of dandelions when their water is in motion, each surrounded by a seating ledge (see View 16 of **Figure 8-10**). On the north side of the building, on West 55th Street, there is also open-air café seating with umbrellas. The New York Hilton Hotel is located on the west side of Sixth Avenue (1321-1335 Sixth Avenue) between West 53rd and 54th Street. This glass- and metal-clad high-rise structure has a wide, 4-story base across its entire site; above this base is a narrow, 42-story (492-foot-tall) tower oriented with its shorter side to the avenue. The building also includes a recessed porte-cochere along Sixth Avenue (see View 17 of **Figure 8-11**).

The former J.C. Penney Building (now the Credit Lyonnais Building), on the west side of Sixth Avenue between West 52nd and 53rd Streets (1301-1315 Sixth Avenue), is 45 stories (618 feet) in height and has setbacks above the 5th, 10th, and 11th floors (see View 18 of **Figure 8-11**). In front of the building, on Sixth Avenue, are two bronze sculptures set in pools of water. Both sides of Sixth Avenue between West 51st and 52nd Streets are similarly occupied with large-scale office towers; on the west side of the avenue at 1281-1297 Sixth Avenue, the former Equitable Life Assurance Society of US building is 42 stories tall (540 feet) and rises without setbacks, and on the east side of the avenue the building at 1290 Sixth Avenue (the former Sperry Rand Building) rises 44 stories (approximately 581 feet) above a 17-story base. At the sides of the building on the west side of the avenue are granite benches in several styles, some of which incorporate landscaped planters, and several loading docks.

The buildings along West 55th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues are mostly small-scale, ranging in height from 5 to 11 stories (see View 19 of **Figure 8-12**). Most are constructed of brick or limestone. Building types along this street include two series of 5-story rowhouses on the south side of the street, and 8- to 10-story apartment buildings on the north side of the street. There is also a 7-story parish house adjacent to the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, and a wide, 14-story apartment building near Sixth Avenue. Many of the buildings contain small stores or restaurants in their lower levels. On West 52nd Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, in addition to the CBS, 666 Fifth Avenue, and 31 West 52nd Street buildings described above, there is a 1-story stone commercial building and a 5-story red brick commercial building with an iron gate. Some buildings along the street contain ground-floor stores. Some of the buildings on the south side of the street are within the northeastern edge of the Rockefeller Center complex.

East of Fifth Avenue, East 52nd Street includes a small, stucco-clad 3-story building, 7-story rowhouses, the through-block, 38-story Harper & Rowe Building (described above), and the Austrian Cultural Institute Building, a striking building of 23 stories (279 feet) that was designed by Raimund Abraham. The building's façade of teal-colored glass tapers upward to comply with zoning laws, with diagonal steel braces visible beneath the glass skin. A protruding stone, box-like element cantilevers midway up the building, and a stone sculptural element extends vertically through the middle of the façade (see View 20 of **Figure 8-12**). 520 Madison Avenue, which extends through the block with frontages on Madison Avenue and East 53rd and 54th Streets, is a 43-story (580-foot-tall) rectangular tower clad in glass and polished red granite; however, unlike other towers in the study area, this building flares out at the bottom, curving toward the sidewalk and lot line. The plaza in front of the building on East 53rd Street has a sidewalk clock and a portion of the former Berlin Wall on display.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

The development site is visible along West 53rd and 54th Streets, but it is fully visible only when close to the site and from near Sixth Avenue. Along Sixth Avenue, it is visible from somewhat further south due to the setback of the CBS Building on its site (see View 21 of **Figure 8-13**). The development site is also visible from West 52nd Street looking through the plaza adjacent to the CBS Building (see View 22 of **Figure 8-13**). Within the project site, St. Thomas Church and its tower, and the “framed” views of the new MoMA buildings' sculpture garden facades are considered to be visual resources. Views to the visual resources on the project site are mainly from West 54th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues—for the MoMA sculpture garden building facades—and Fifth Avenue near 53rd Street for St. Thomas Church and its tower (see Views 5-7 and 9, above). Views along this stretch of West 54th Street also include a transparent cast-resin water tower—an art installation that was moved from its original location in SoHo—that is installed on the museum's roof (see View 23 of **Figure 8-14**).

Views south along Sixth Avenue include the iconic neon, vertical sign for Radio City Music Hall amidst numerous modern high-rise buildings (see View 24 of **Figure 8-14**). In addition to St. Thomas Church, views north along Fifth Avenue include Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church and its spire, which is considered to be a visual resource; however, the prominence of the churches is lessened along the avenue due to the size of surrounding buildings. The northern view corridor of Fifth Avenue also includes the sawtooth-edged façade of Trump Tower and the stand of trees installed halfway up the building (see View 25 of **Figure 8-15**). Views south along Fifth Avenue also include the two churches, however, no distant or prominent visual resources are visible in these views. St. Patrick's Cathedral is also visible in views south on Fifth Avenue,



but only from the far southern portion of the study area, as it is set back on its site. The trees of Central Park can be seen in the far distance in views north on both avenues.

Views along the east-west streets in the study area are long and narrow, due to the height of their surrounding buildings, and generally continue for long distances with no notable features. Views west on East 53rd Street include St. Thomas Church in the foreground, and the Museum Tower in the distance. Views east on 54th Street include the slanted crown of the Citigroup Center in the distance, and views east on 55th Street include the Chippendale top of the Sony Building in the distance as well as the stone spire of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in the foreground (see View 26 of **Figure 8-15**). Paley Park is a visual resource within the study area; however, it is visible only from adjacent portions of East 53rd Street.

## **SECONDARY (1/4-MILE) STUDY AREA**

### *URBAN DESIGN*

#### *Topography and Natural Features*

The topography of the secondary study area, like that of the primary study area, is generally flat. There are no natural features in the study area, although Central Park is located just to the north.

#### *Street Pattern, Street Hierarchy, and Block Form*

The ¼-mile study area is part of the Manhattan street grid, with wide north-south avenues and narrow east-west streets creating rectangular city blocks. Between Park and Fifth Avenues, blocks are shorter than they are between Fifth and Seventh Avenues. Variations in the street pattern are created by the Rockefeller Center complex, where the north-south, pedestrian-only Rockefeller Plaza bisects the three blocks between West 48th and 51st Streets, and by Broadway, which runs at a diagonal to the street grid at the western edge of the study area and creates small, irregularly-shaped blocks between Broadway and Seventh Avenue. The north-bound avenues in the secondary study area are Madison and Sixth Avenues, and the south-bound avenues are Fifth and Seventh Avenues. Park Avenue carries three lanes of traffic in each direction separated by a wide, landscaped median. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic is heavy in the secondary study area due to the mix of office buildings, the shopping districts along Fifth and Madison Avenues that include department stores, large hotels, museums, the nearness of Central Park, and tourist-heavy sites, such as St. Patrick's Cathedral and Rockefeller Center, as well as Times Square, which is located southwest of the study area.

#### *Streetscape*

The streetscape of the ¼-mile study area is similar to that of the 400-foot study area, and it is that of an area densely developed with office, hotel, retail, institutional, cultural, and residential uses. In general, streetwalls are consistent along the side streets, the west side of Park Avenue, Madison Avenue, and Fifth Avenue. On Sixth Avenue, streetwalls are not consistent along the west side of the avenue, because the large office buildings between West 48th and 55th Streets are sited behind public plazas. Plazas and courtyards in other locations throughout the study area also create breaks in the streetwalls.

Distinctive streetscape elements in the ¼-mile study area include plazas, atriums, and courtyards. As mentioned above, the office buildings lining the west side of Sixth Avenue between West 48th and 55th Streets have public plazas, most of which contain fountains and seating. Some also have sculptures, like the plaza in front of the Credit Lyonnais Building at

1301 Sixth Avenue, where there are two large sculptures of headless and armless human torsos, and the plaza in front of the Time & Life Building at 1271 Sixth Avenue, which contains an abstract metal sculpture. Public plazas are also associated with the IBM Building and the General Motors Building. The IBM Building occupies the southwest corner of the intersection of Madison Avenue and East 57th Street, where there is a small, corner plaza notable for its large Alexander Calder stabile. The General Motors Building is set back from Fifth Avenue between East 58th and 59th Streets behind a large public plaza with movable tables and chairs, pools, and a large, glass cube-shaped structure that functions as the entrance to a below-grade retail store. The IBM Building also has an enclosed public atrium on East 56th Street. The atrium is an approximately two-story glass structure that contains trees and seating. Directly across East 56th Street is a public arcade associated with the Sony Building at 550 Madison Avenue. The glass-roofed arcade runs through the block to East 55th Street. Another small plaza associated with an office building is located at 12 East 49th Street, between Fifth and Madison Avenues. This plaza, which is located in front of the building, contains a few benches, trees, and planters. Located on the east side of Madison Avenue between East 50th and 51st Streets, the New York Palace Hotel has a courtyard enclosed with a decorative fence along the avenue. This modern hotel incorporates the older Villard Houses, a U-shaped building set around a central courtyard. Inside the courtyard, heavy stone planters contain trees strung with lighting.

A collection of notable public plazas in the ¼-mile study area are located within the Rockefeller Center complex, which is bounded by Fifth and Sixth Avenues and West 48th and 51st Streets. As mentioned above, Rockefeller Plaza bisects the three blocks of the complex. This wide north-south plaza has decorative paving, plantings, and seating. During the Christmas season, the famous Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree is located on the plaza in front of the GE Building, which is the centerpiece building of the complex. At other times of the year, the plaza hosts public art, farmers markets, live viewing of sporting events, and other activities. Across Rockefeller Plaza from the GE Building is a sunken plaza that contains restaurant seating in the summer and an ice skating rink in the winter months. A fountain and large gilded statue of Prometheus are located in the sunken plaza, which is ringed by flagpoles and plantings. Between the sunken plaza and Fifth Avenue are the Channel Gardens. This plaza is a pedestrian path that leads from Fifth Avenue through the block between West 49th and 50th Streets to Rockefeller Plaza. The Channel Gardens plaza, which is lined by low-rise buildings with ground-floor retail, slopes downward from the avenue and has a series of connected fountains and pools with aquatic-themed sculptures, as well as some plantings and benches. Another Rockefeller Center plaza is located in front of the International Building at 630 Fifth Avenue, between 50th and 51st Streets. This small plaza on the avenue is notable for the large bronze sculpture of Atlas hoisting the open form of a sphere above his head. Additional unique streetscape features associated with Rockefeller Center are the numerous Art Deco reliefs on many of the buildings that form the complex. These reliefs tend to be located over primary building entrances, as well as over ground-floor windows. Many are multi-colored stone reliefs; others are made from stainless steel, glass, and bronze. All are figurative and symbolic of the buildings to which they are attached.

At the northern edge of the study area is Grand Army Plaza, which is located on both sides of Fifth Avenue between 58th and 60th Streets. The southern portion of the plaza contains the marble Pulitzer Fountain, a terraced fountain capped by a large, bronze nude. Trees ring the west, east, and south sides of the plaza. The north end of this portion of the plaza has an open area on West 59th Street with decorative paving, flower beds, and benches. The Plaza Hotel is located on the west side of the Pulitzer Fountain plaza. Across West 59th Street, the northern

portion of Grand Army Plaza contains flower beds and benches around a large, equestrian statue of General William Tecumseh Sherman being led by a personification of Victory.

St. Patrick's Cathedral occupies the block between Fifth and Madison Avenues and East 50th and 51st Streets and contributes unique streetscape features to the area. The church is raised above, and set back from, Fifth Avenue on a podium. The widened sidewalks and wide flights of stairs along Fifth Avenue and at the corners of East 50th and 51st Streets create open areas that function as gathering spaces. Stone retaining walls border the cathedral property along East 50th and 51st Streets. Between these walls and the cathedral are grassy areas with trees. Raised planted areas are also located on the Madison Avenue portion of the cathedral property.

Additional streetscape features that are distinctive to the ¼-mile study area are the large display windows of the department stores and specialty retail shops along Madison and Fifth Avenues. During the holiday seasons, many of these stores—notably Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman—elaborately decorate their windows. At Rockefeller Center, the retail stores throughout the complex have unified bronze-framed display windows. In addition, some of the office buildings on the west side of Sixth Avenue have electronic ticker displays of news items. The neon signs of Radio City Music Hall are also notable streetscape features.

Street furniture in the ¼-mile study area includes historic reproduction and modern street lights, traffic signs, garbage bins, newsstands, security bollards (some of which are also planters), newspaper boxes, fire hydrants, and phone booths. Numerous food vendors are found in the study area, especially along Sixth Avenue, where there are also stands selling purses, scarves, art, and other items.

### *Building Uses, Bulk, and Arrangement*

The ¼-mile study area encompasses a large section of Midtown Manhattan, worldly famous for its distinctive skyline (see **Figure 8-2**, above, and **Figures 8-16** through **8-21**). Overall, the study area is characterized by a mix of commercial office, retail, hotel, cultural, religious, and residential uses housed in low- to high-rise buildings that display a wide array of massings, styles, materials, and arrangements. Most buildings are attached, but freestanding buildings include the low-rise Rockefeller Center buildings on each side of Channel Gardens, St. Patrick's Cathedral, the General Motors Building on Fifth Avenue between East 58th and 59th Streets, the McGraw-Hill Building at 1221 Sixth Avenue, and the office building at 1251 Sixth Avenue. A variety of massing types are represented with multiple building examples in this large study area. There are buildings that rise for their full heights from a setback at grade, buildings that have setbacks on their upper floors, and buildings that rise flush for their full heights from the lot line.

The diverse collection of buildings making up the study area includes numerous examples of buildings with unusual forms, many of which are iconic New York City structures. The Lever House at 390 Park Avenue consists of a 310-foot-tall slab set at the edge of a horizontal base. Both the tower slab and base are clad in a metal and glass curtain wall, and the base is raised on columns. On Madison Avenue, two distinctive buildings are the Look Building and the Sony Building. Located at 488 Madison Avenue, the 23-story (294-foot-tall) Look Building is massed with setbacks above the thirteenth floor to create a terraced form. The building corners are rounded and continuous strip windows encircle the three facades on Madison Avenue and East 51st and 52nd Streets. The Sony Building at 550 Madison Avenue rises to a height of 649 feet without setbacks on Madison Avenue and East 55th and 56th Streets and is topped with an unusual scrolled crown. At the base, there is a multi-story entrance arch. On Fifth Avenue, just outside the 400-foot study area at 51st Street, is St. Patrick's Cathedral. As described above, it is



Sherry-Netherland Hotel, view north on Fifth Avenue from 57th Street 27



9 West 57th Street, view west from Madison Avenue 28



Carnegie Hall Tower, view northeast on Seventh Avenue from West 53rd Street 29



Metropolitan Tower, view west on West 57th Street from Fifth Avenue 30



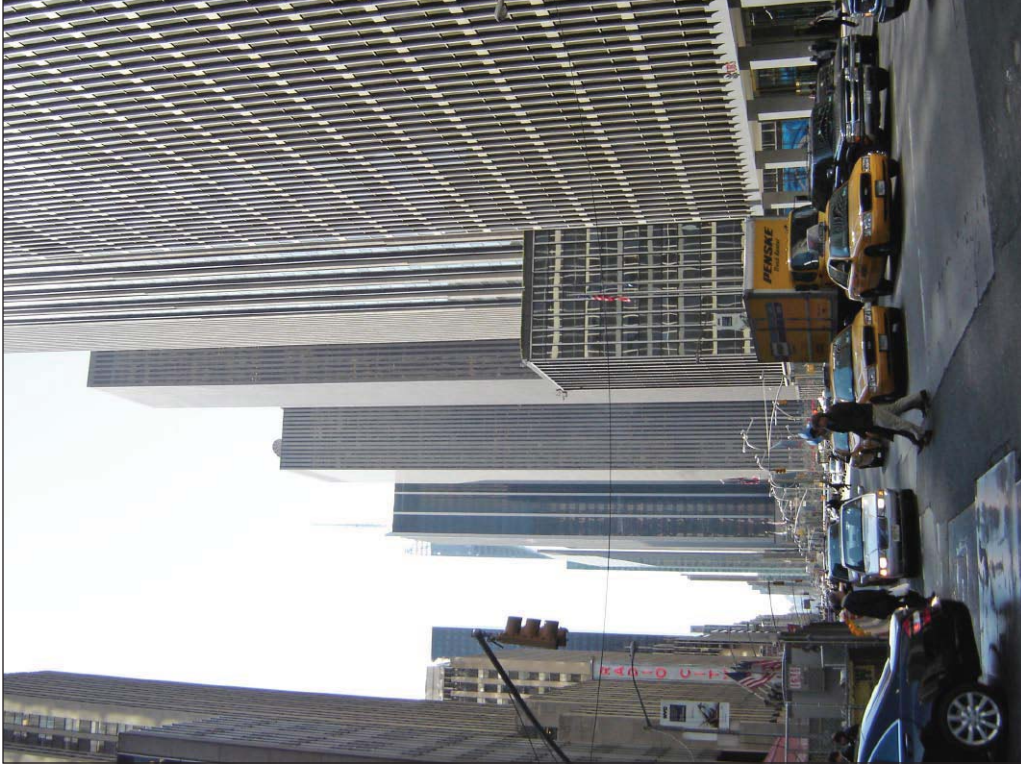
CitySpire Center, view west on West 56th Street from Fifth Avenue 31



GE Building, view west on 49th Street from Madison Avenue 32



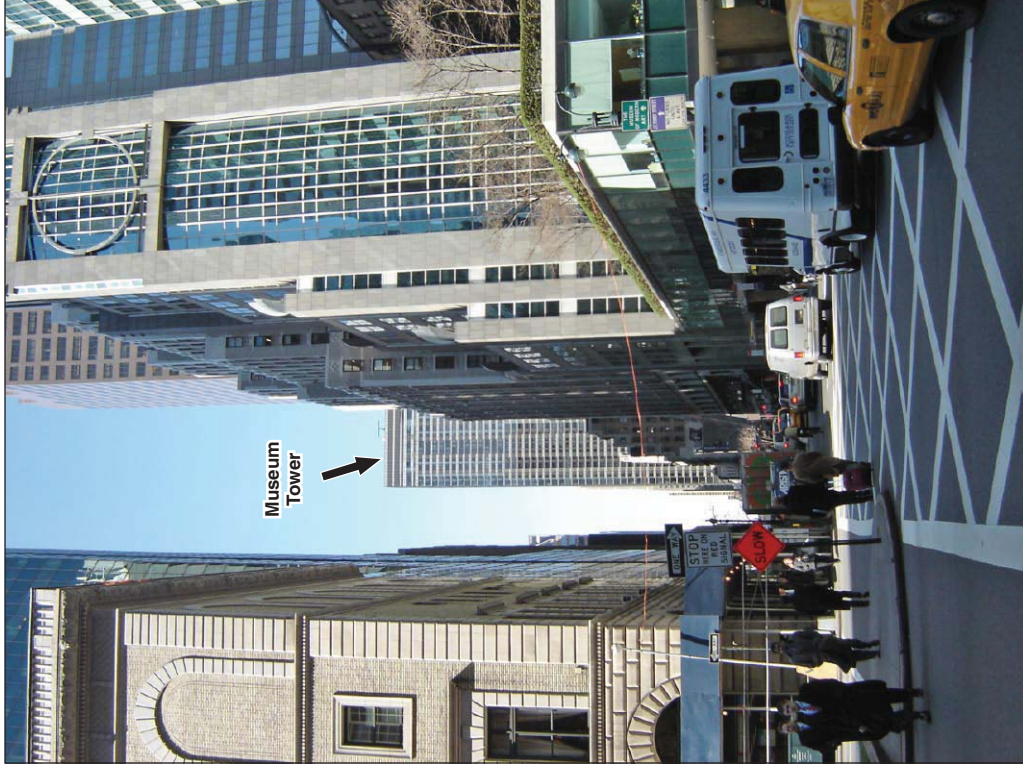
View northwest on Sixth Avenue from West 48th Street 33



View southwest on Sixth Avenue from West 52nd Street 34



View east on West 53rd Street from Seventh Avenue 35



View west on East 53rd Street from Park Avenue 36





View southwest from Grand Army Plaza 37



View north on Fifth Avenue from 49th Street 38

a freestanding building raised above the street on a podium. It has a cruciform plan and two 345-foot-tall spires. The General Motors Building and the Sherry-Netherland Hotel are also distinctive buildings located on Fifth Avenue. The General Motors Building at 761 Fifth Avenue is a 720-foot-tall slab set back from Fifth Avenue behind a public plaza (described above). The façade is articulated with alternating vertical strips of windows and marble cladding. Directly to the north across East 59th Street is the Sherry-Netherland Hotel, a 560-foot-tall building. Above the twenty-third floor, the hotel rises as a tall, brick spire (see View 27 of **Figure 8-16**). Located near the General Motors Building and Grand Army Plaza is the Solow Building at 9 West 57th Street, midblock between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. This through-block building has gently sloped facades that rise to a height of 687 feet (see View 28 of **Figure 8-16**). The facades flare outward at the base on West 57th and 58th Streets and are clad in glass with some marble framing. To the northwest of the project site is a cluster of three tall buildings, each of which has a distinctive form. The Carnegie Hall Tower at 152 West 57th Street, adjacent to Carnegie Hall in the midblock between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, is a narrow, 858-foot-tall building with a projecting cornice (see View 29 of **Figure 8-17**). On the west side facing Carnegie Hall is a shorter wing, and the tower is set back from West 57th Street above a five-story base. The Metropolitan Tower is adjacent to the east of Carnegie Hall Tower, also in the midblock between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. Above a 13-story base, this 723-foot-tall glass tower has a triangular form with the long side facing northeast away from the Carnegie Hall Tower from which it is separated by the narrow 5-story Russian Tea Room (see View 30 of **Figure 8-17**). Located south across West 56th Street from the Carnegie Hall and Metropolitan Towers is CitySpire Center. This 810-foot-tall, midblock building has a domed, octagonal tower with 630-foot-tall wings on its east and west sides (see View 31 of **Figure 8-18**). The wings have chamfered corners and have two setbacks each. To the south and west of the project site are Rockefeller Center and the row of office buildings along Sixth Avenue between West 48th and 54th Street discussed above. Rockefeller Center is a collection of Art Deco limestone buildings centered around Rockefeller Plaza and the 850-foot-tall GE Building. The GE Building is a long and narrow midblock tower set on a wider base that has components of different stories. Facing Rockefeller Plaza, the tower uses multiple setbacks to create the impression of a more slender profile (see View 32 of **Figure 8-18**). Around the plaza and GE Building are buildings of various heights and forms created by different setback arrangements. The office buildings on the west side of Sixth Avenue between West 48th and 54th Streets—which are described individually by name, above and below—are all set back from the avenue behind plazas, are mostly freestanding, have large rectangular footprints, and rise without setbacks above the initial setbacks at grade. Together, they create a wall of boxy, modernist office towers, ranging in height from 492 to 754 feet tall (see **Figure 8-19**).

Building heights in the ¼-mile study area (including the 400-foot-study area and the project site) range from just a few stories to 858 feet tall (Carnegie Hall Tower). Overall, there are approximately 59 buildings taller than 400 feet, and many of these are iconic skyscrapers. Of these buildings, 15 are 600 feet or more in height (see **Figure 8-2**). The tallest buildings in the study area include: the 618-foot-tall Credit Lyonnais Building at 1301 Sixth Avenue; the 622-foot-tall office building at 14 East 49th Street; the 647-foot-tall Alliance Capital Building at 1345 Sixth Avenue; the 649-foot-tall Sony Building at 550 Madison Avenue; the 653-foot-tall building at 712 Fifth Avenue; the 664-foot-tall Trump Tower at 725 Fifth Avenue; the 687-foot-tall Solow Building at 9 West 57th Street; the 697-foot-tall McGraw-Hill Building at 1221 Sixth Avenue; the 720-foot-tall General Motors Building at 761 Fifth Avenue; the 723-foot-tall Metropolitan Tower at 146 West 57th Street; the 754-foot-tall Exxon Building at 1251 Sixth Avenue; the 769-foot-tall Equitable Life Assurance Building at 789 Seventh Avenue; the 810-

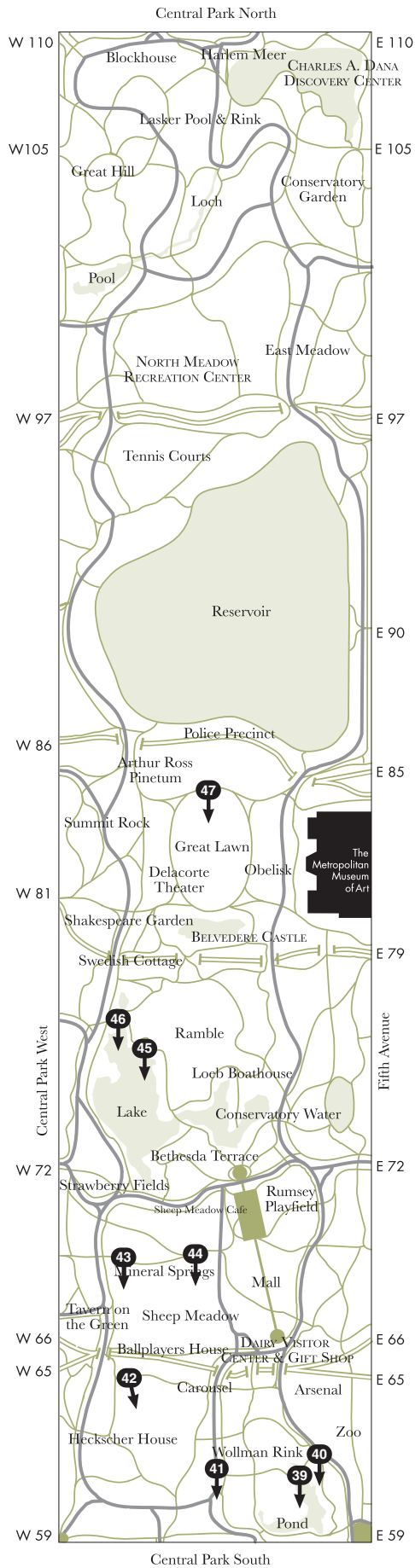
foot-tall CitySpire Center at 150 West 56th Street; the 850-foot-tall GE Building at 30 Rockefeller Plaza; and the 858-foot-tall Carnegie Hall Tower at 152 West 57th Street. Most of these are office buildings and have the uniformly large floor plates suitable for office use. Many, especially those on Sixth Avenue, have large plazas or widened sidewalks. Carnegie Hall Tower, however, has a relatively small floor plate and covers its site.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

The 592-foot-tall Museum Tower on the project site is visible for long distances on 53rd Street. From the west, it is clearly visible from Seventh Avenue (see View 35 of **Figure 8-20**). From the east, it is clearly visible from at least as far as Park Avenue (see View 36 of **Figure 8-20**). In addition, the top of the Museum Tower is visible over intervening buildings from the eastern edge of the northern section of Grand Army Plaza (i.e., along Fifth Avenue north of 59th Street). From this location, it is seen in the background behind the 687-foot-tall Solow Building and the 653-foot-tall building at 712 Fifth Avenue (at West 56th Street) (see View 37 of **Figure 8-21**). The development site itself is only fully visible in its immediate vicinity (within the 400-foot-study area) on West 53rd and 54th Streets and on Sixth Avenue as described above. From farther away on West 53rd and 54th Streets, the development site is not visible due to intervening buildings. However, the developable space above the project site is visible from farther away, as suggested by the visibility of the Museum Tower in the 53rd and 54th Street view corridors.

Views north and south on Fifth Avenue within the ¼-mile study area include several visual resources. St. Patrick's Cathedral is a visual resource, but it is only prominently visible in its immediate vicinity, because it is set back from Fifth Avenue (see View 38 of **Figure 8-21**). The Rockefeller Center complex is a visual resource that is visible for relatively long distances on Fifth Avenue. In addition, the GE Building is prominent in the 49th and 50th Street view corridors from Madison Avenue, and it is also visible over St. Patrick's Cathedral from Madison Avenue at East 51st Street. In addition, the views through Rockefeller Center along Channel Gardens and 49th through 51st Streets are visual resources. On Sixth Avenue, there are views of Rockefeller Center, particularly of Radio City Music Hall and its neon signs. Views north on Fifth Avenue include Central Park and Grand Army Plaza, which become more prominent north along the avenue, and the Sherry-Netherland Hotel (see View 27 of **Figure 8-16**). These views are visual resources, as are views south of the Empire State Building. Further, the expansive skyline views from Grand Army Plaza are visual resources, because of their openness and the wide variety of buildings included within them. Additional important views include views south on Seventh Avenue into Times Square and views south on Park Avenue of the Helmsley and Met Life Buildings. On the east-west streets, views are long and narrow and lined by tall buildings.

Although it is located outside of the secondary study area, Central Park provides views of the developable space above the project site from certain locations. These locations were approximately determined by conducting a field survey through Central Park (south of the Reservoir) and pinpointing locations from where the Museum Tower and/or the GE Building (which is located three blocks south of the development site between Fifth and Sixth Avenues) are visible. From these viewing locations, it is anticipated that the tower of the proposed building as well as the Expanded Development Scenario building could be visible. Views from Central Park toward the development site are variable due to topography, tree cover, and intervening buildings. The long views that would likely include the proposed building tend to occur where there are expansive open areas in the park that provide existing skyline views (see **Figure 8-22**).



Credit:  
Central Park Conservancy  
All rights reserved. 2007

44 → Photograph View Direction and Reference Number

Secondary Study Area  
Reference Map of Views from Central Park  
Figure 8-22

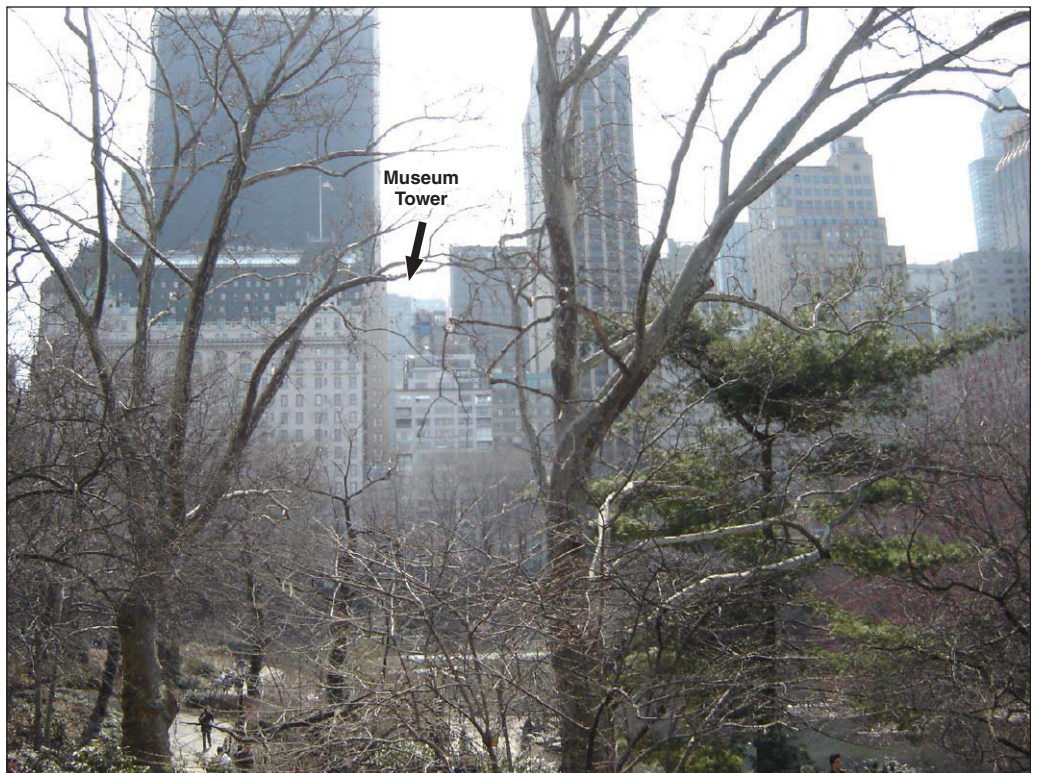
In general, views south from Central Park to the developable space above the project site include a diverse collection of tall, notable skyscrapers. In the southernmost section of Central Park between West 59th and 65th Streets, there are some views of the upper floors of the Museum Tower and GE Building from the eastern edge of the Pond, from the north-south drive west of Wollman Rink, and from the northern edge of the Heckscher Ballfields. From the eastern side of the Pond, there are some views of more distant buildings over the buildings lining Central Park South, but the Museum Tower only becomes visible from the bridge over the Pond; from that location, it is a background structure (see View 39 of **Figure 8-23**). The top of the Museum Tower is also visible from the higher ground northeast of the Pond (see View 40 of **Figure 8-23**). Between Wollman Rink and the Chess and Checkers House, there are some limited views of the GE Building, and from the north-south drive just west of Wollman Rink, there are some views of the upper floors of the Museum Tower (see View 41 of **Figure 8-24**). The Heckscher Ballfields in the southwestern portion of Central Park provide expansive skyline views to the south. From the northern edge of the ballfields (in the approximate location of West 65th Street), the top of the Museum Tower becomes visible over intervening buildings (see View 42 of **Figure 8-24**). The GE Building is also visible in some of these views.

The Sheep Meadow, which is located to the west of the Mall between approximately West 66th and 70th Streets, provides expansive views of the Midtown skyline. From the northern edge of this large, open field, the Museum Tower is clearly visible, and more of the tower is visible than just the upper floors (see **Figure 8-25**). The GE Building is also prominent in views from the Sheep Meadow. From the Mall and Bethesda Terrace, there do not appear to be any views of the Museum Tower or the developable space above the project site due to heavy tree cover and intervening buildings. From Cherry Hill and the carriage turnaround just west of Bethesda Terrace, there are some extremely limited views of the top of the Museum Tower through intervening trees.

From the northern edge of the Lake, the Museum Tower and GE Building are both clearly visible as part of the skyline south of Central Park (see **Figure 8-26**). The Museum Tower is also visible from the northernmost point of the Lake to the western edge of the park at Central Park West in the vicinity of West 77th Street. From the terrace at the base of Belvedere Castle, the dome of CitySpire Center is somewhat visible over the trees. The Great Lawn, like the Sheep Meadow and the Lake, provides expansive views of the Midtown skyline, but the buildings in these views are more distant from this location in the park (between approximately West 80th and 85th Streets). The views from the Great Lawn include the Museum Tower and GE Building and other tall buildings within the ¼-mile study area, such as the 858-foot-tall Carnegie Hall Tower, the 810-foot-tall CitySpire Center, the 687-foot-tall Solow Building, the 720-foot-tall General Motors Building, the 649-foot-tall Sony Building, and the 664-foot-tall Trump Tower. The views from the Great Lawn also include tall buildings located outside of the study area, like the 915-foot-tall Citicorp Center on Lexington Avenue and East 53rd Street, the 806-foot-tall One Beacon Court building on Lexington Avenue at East 58th Street, the two 750-foot-tall towers of the TimeWarner Center at Columbus Circle, the 1,048-foot-tall (to the top of the spire) Chrysler Building, the 1,200-foot-tall (to the top of the spire) Bank of America Tower at One Bryant Park, and the 779-foot-tall One Worldwide Plaza on Eighth Avenue at West 49th Street (see **Figure 8-27**). As described above, the Empire State Building spire (which reaches above the building to a total of approximately 1,450 feet in height) is also somewhat visible from this location, behind intervening buildings, as are other, more distant skyscrapers.



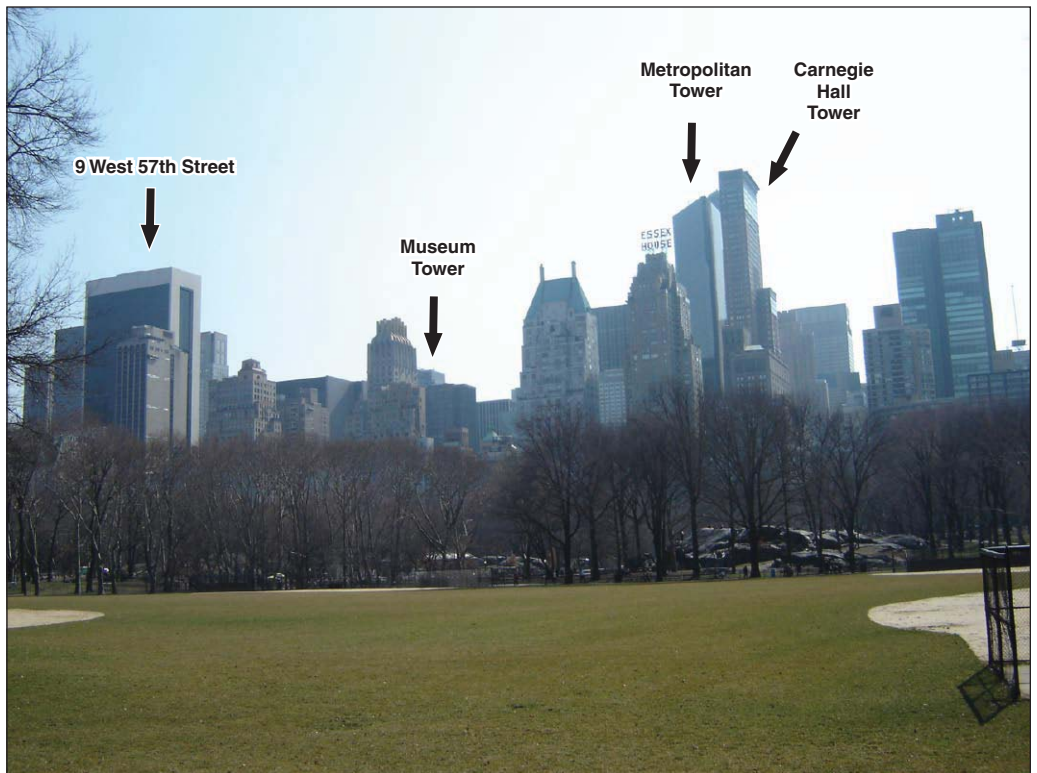
View south from bridge over the Pond 39



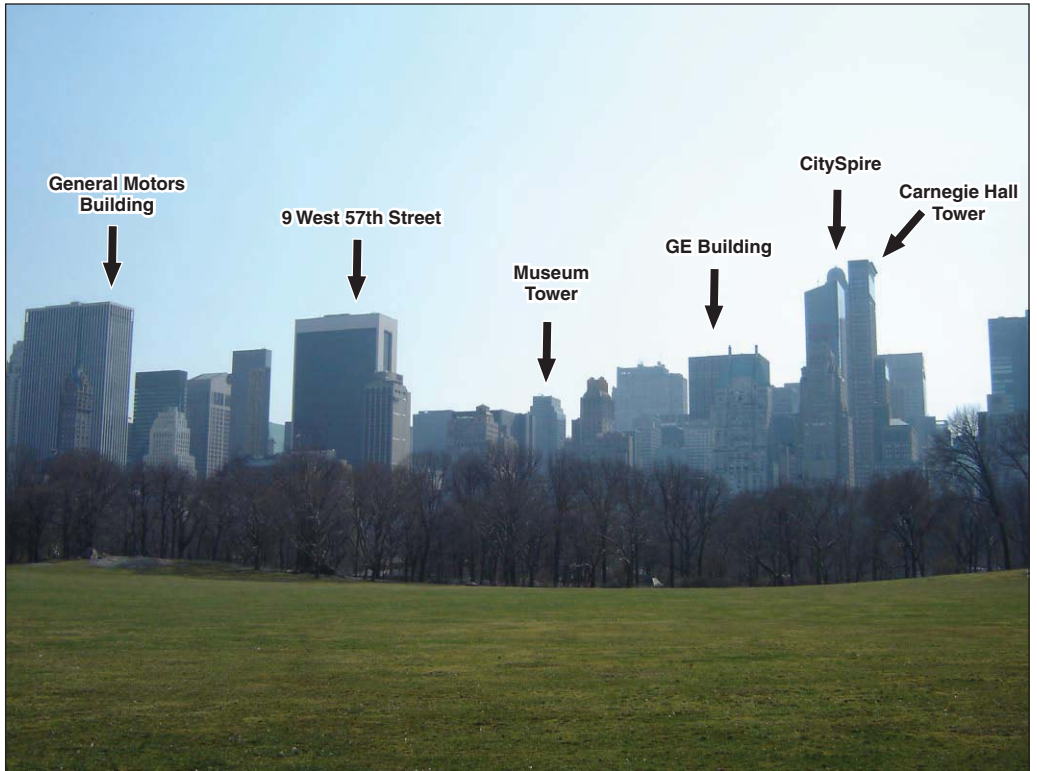
View south from higher ground north of the Pond 40



View southeast from Park Drive west of Wollman Rink 41



View south from Heckscher Ballfields 42

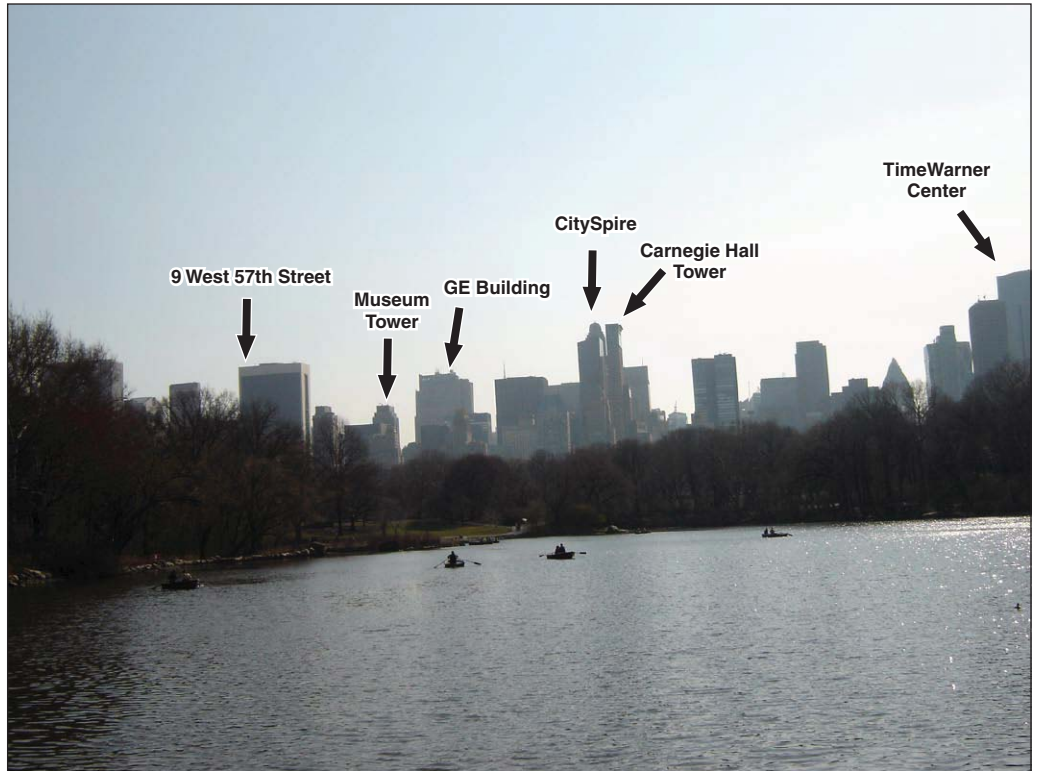


View south from northern edge of Sheep Meadow 43

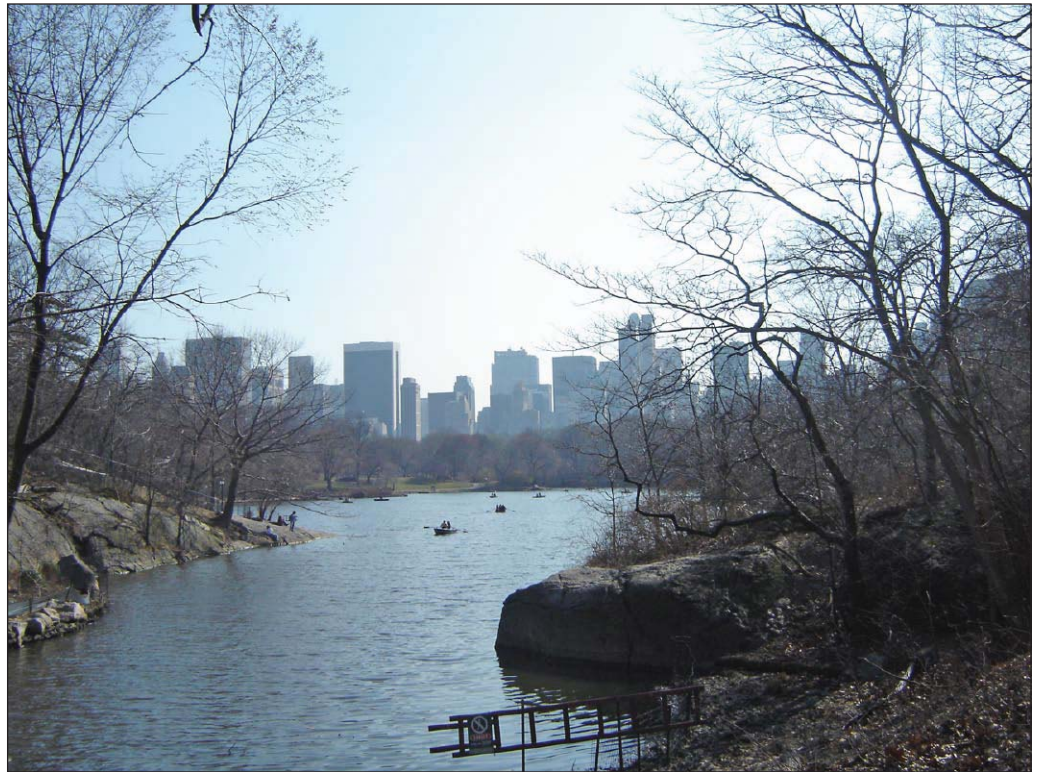


View south from northern edge of Sheep Meadow 44

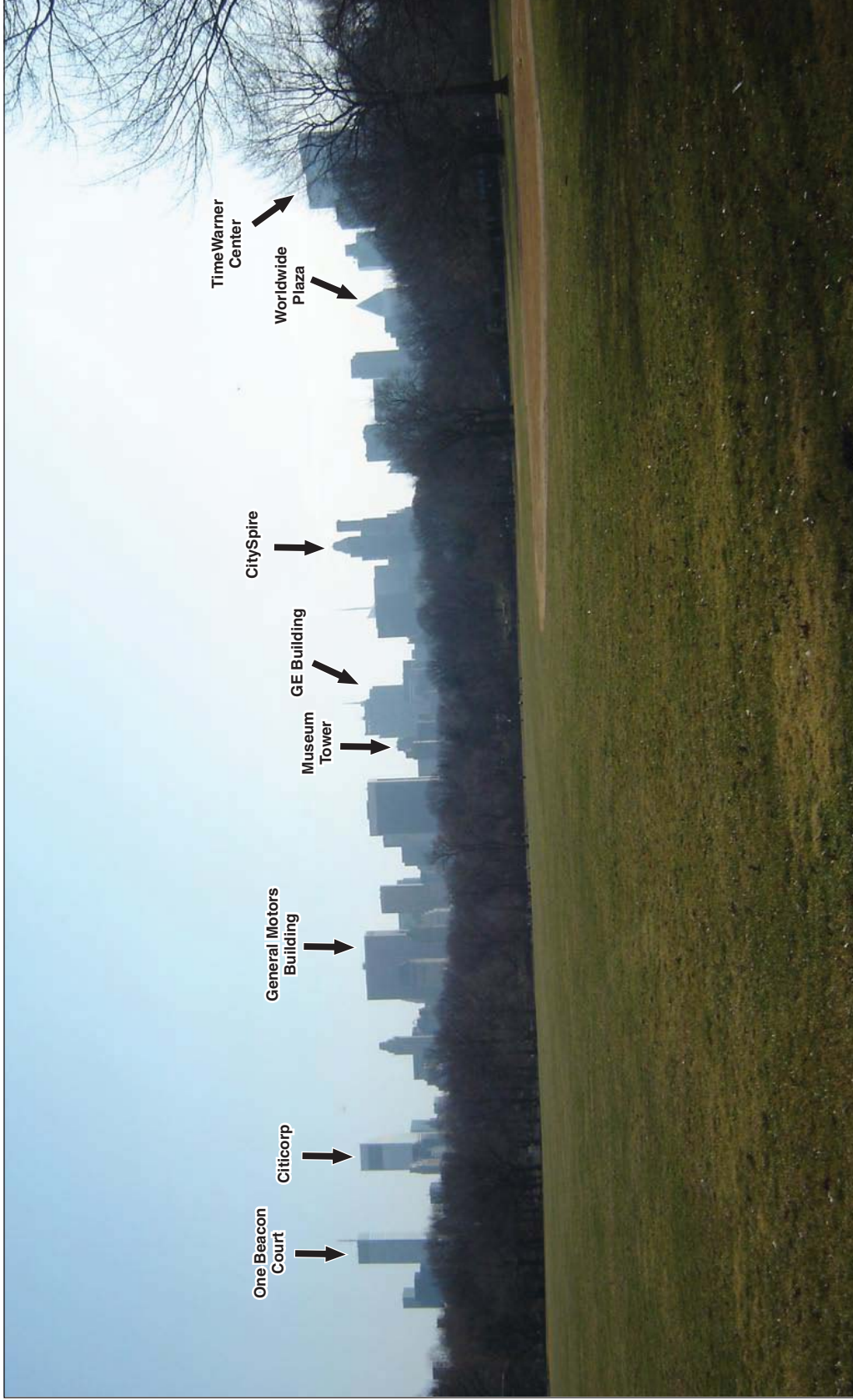




View south from northern portion of the Lake 45



View south from bridge at northern portion of the Lake 46



View south from northern edge of the Great Lawn 47

## C. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In the future without the proposed project the development site will be developed with one of two scenarios—the Previously Approved Project or the Expanded Development Scenario. In addition other projects are expected to be completed in the study areas. This section first describes changes on the development site with the Previously Approved Project and Expanded Development Scenario and identifies other potential development projects, and then considers potential impacts on the characteristics of urban design and visual resources.

### DESCRIPTION OF NO ACTION PROJECTS

#### *PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PROJECT*

As described in more detail above in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the Previously Approved Project will be approximately 250,000 gsf in size and will contain museum-related, commercial office, and ground-floor retail space. It will be a glass-clad tower approximately 285 feet in height with entrances on both West 53rd and 54th Streets (see **Figures 8-28 and 8-29**). This project was evaluated in the *Museum of Modern Art Technical Memorandum* (March 23, 2007).

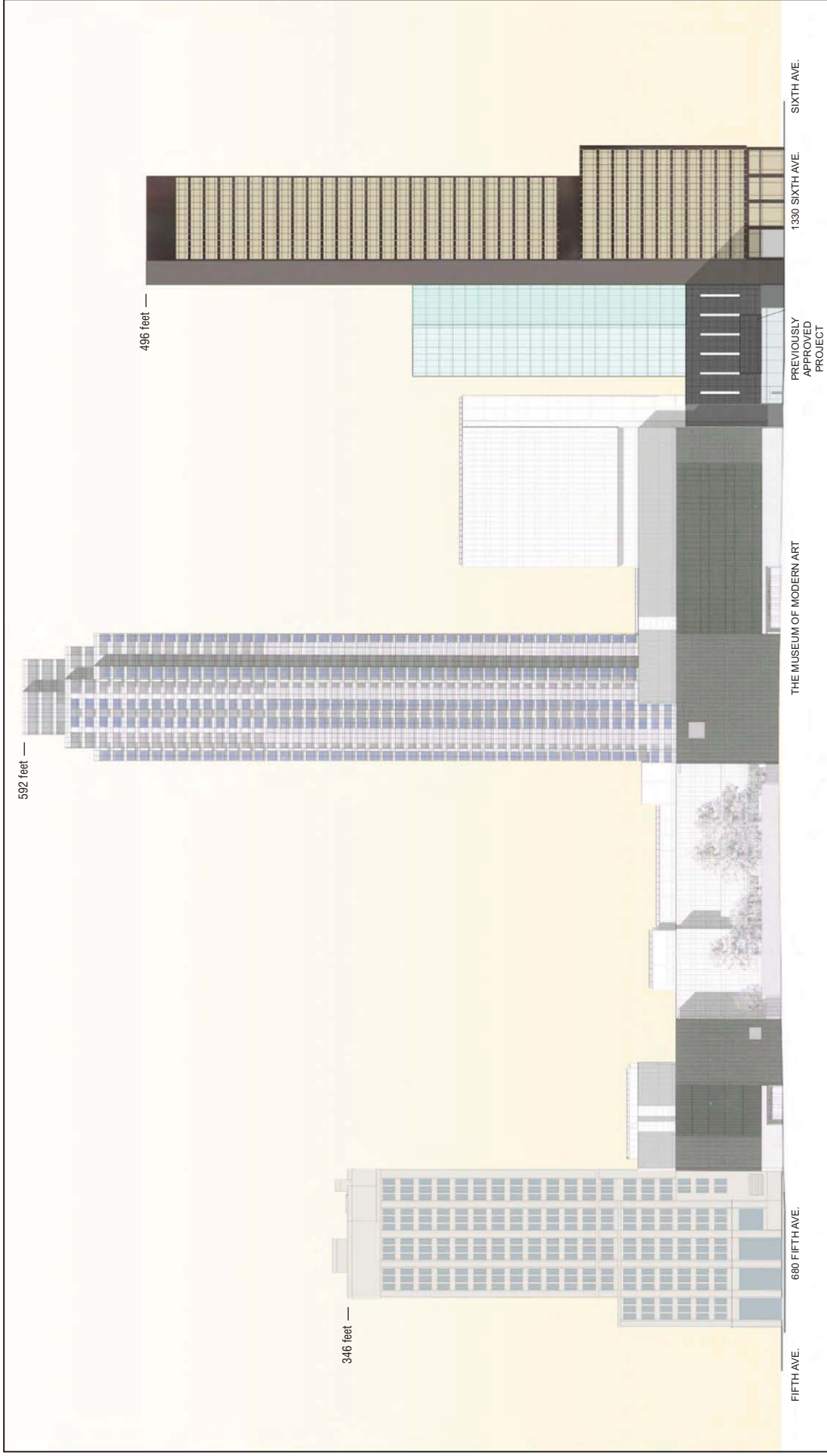
#### *EXPANDED DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO*

As described in more detail in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the building in the Expanded Development Scenario would be approximately 508,013 gsf in size and would contain museum-related, hotel, and residential space. It would be a glass-clad tower approximately 1,089 feet in height with an entrance on West 53rd Street. The tower of the Expanded Development Scenario building would set back at several stages, but would maintain a mostly rectangular configuration (see **Figures 8-30 and 8-31**).

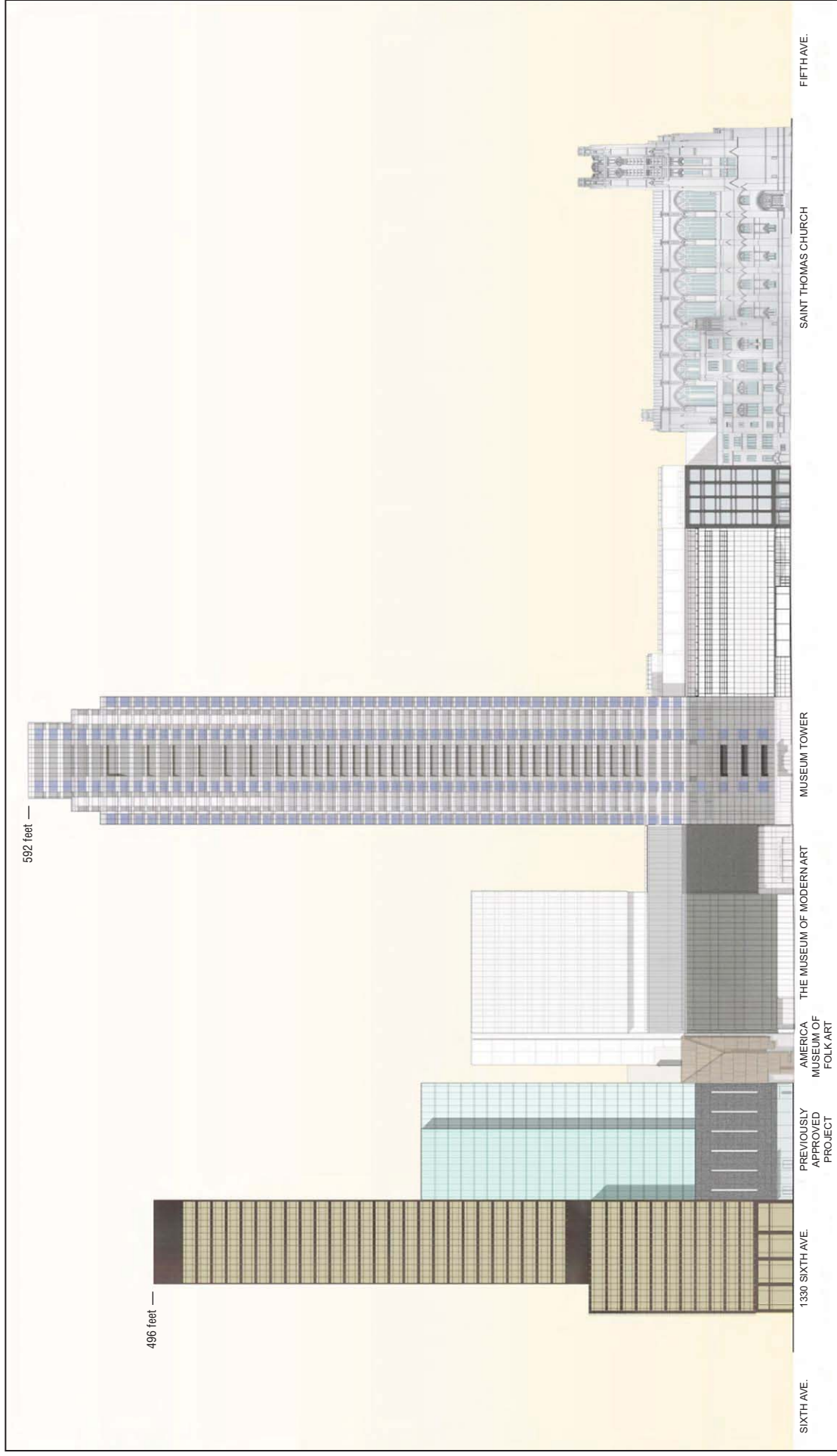
#### *OTHER KNOWN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS*

There are three new developments under construction within the 400-foot study area. Southeast of the development site, an 11-story hotel building is under development on the site of the former Donnell Library. The building will connect to the 21 Club restaurant on West 52nd Street, and the library will occupy part of the new building’s first three levels. One block north of the project site, a 22-story building with 54 dwelling units is under construction at 12 West 55th Street. A 30-story (400-foot-tall) office building is under construction on East 53rd Street at 510 Madison Avenue. These developments will be consistent with the uses in the 400-foot study area, and would add to its already dense character.

Within the ¼-mile study area, there are an additional five developments under construction or planned for development by the proposed project’s build year. At 434 Park Avenue (at East 56th Street) a residential, hotel, and retail building is planned for development. On the block bounded by West 56th and 57th Streets and Fifth and Sixth Avenues, a 24-story residential building is planned for 52 West 56th Street and a 16-story residential building is under construction at 33 West 56th Street. Across Sixth Avenue, a 28-story hotel is under construction at 102 West 56th Street. The fifth project is a 50-story hotel and residential building planned for a through-block lot at 147-161 West 57th Street. These residential and hotel buildings will be in keeping with uses and building heights in the ¼-mile study area and will add to the area’s already dense character.

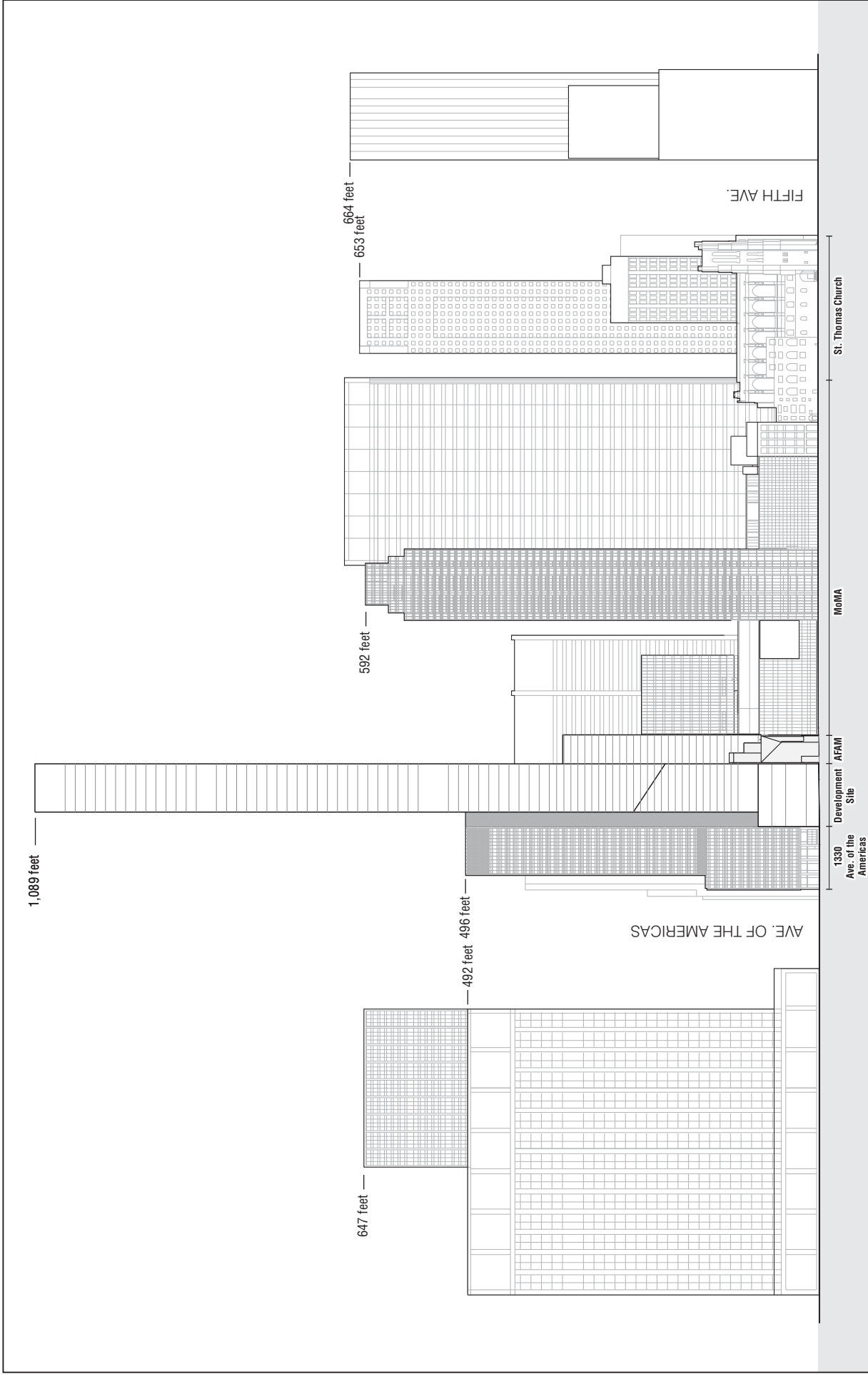


Future Without the Proposed Project:  
Previously Approved Project  
West 54th Street Elevation  
Figure 8-28

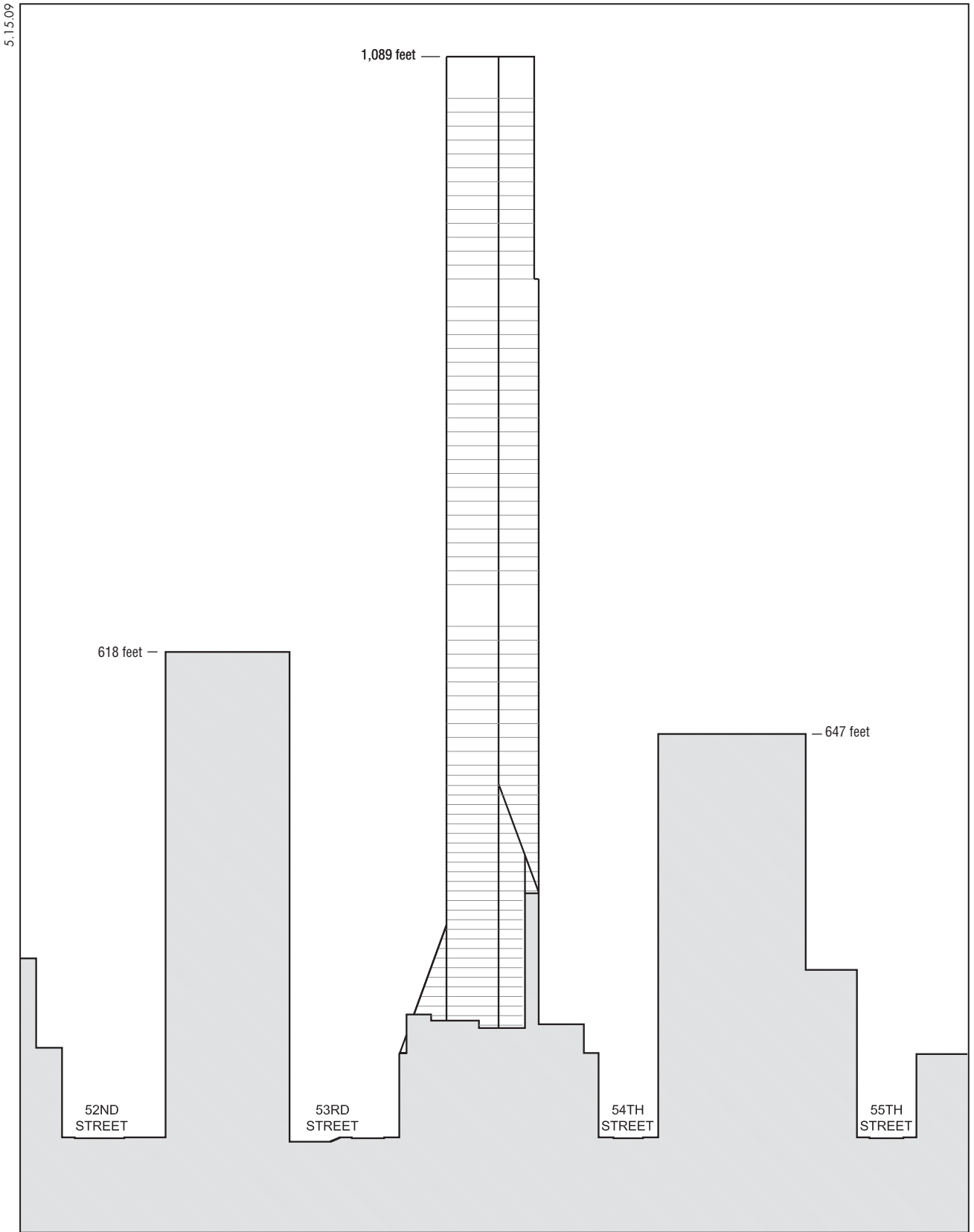


SOURCE: KOHN PEDERSEN FOX ASSOCIATES P.C.

Future Without the Proposed Project:  
Previously Approved Project  
West 53rd Street Elevation  
Figure 8-29



Future Without the Proposed Project:  
Expanded Development Scenario  
South Elevation  
Figure 8-30



Future Without the Proposed Project:  
Expanded Development Scenario  
East Elevation  
Figure 8-31

## DEVELOPMENT SITE

### *URBAN DESIGN*

#### *Topography and Natural Features*

Both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario would alter the character of the development site. It would no longer be a flat, paved, fenced lot but rather it would be a new high-rise building. However, there are no natural features on the existing site to be altered.

#### *Street Pattern, Street Hierarchy and Block Form*

Neither the Previously Approved Project nor the Expanded Development Scenario would alter the street pattern, street hierarchy, and block form as related to the development site.

#### *Streetscape*

Both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario would alter the streetscape by replacing a flat, paved, fenced lot with a new modern building that would have active new uses at ground level on both West 53rd and West 54th Streets. Both would reinforce the streetwall.

#### *Building Uses, Bulk and Arrangements*

Both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario would replace a vacant lot with new, active uses. The former would include museum, office and retail space, while the latter would contain museum, hotel (with restaurant), and residential uses. Both would create new bulk on the development site, although the Expanded Development Scenario, with a much taller building, would have a greater bulk. Both would occupy the project site without setbacks at ground level, other than those for pedestrian circulation.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

As noted above, there are no visual resources located on the development site, and there are no prominent or notable views from the development site to surrounding visual resources. Therefore, neither the Previously Approved Project nor the Expanded Development Scenario building would alter any views from the development site to visual resources.

## PROJECT SITE/TRANSFER SITES AND STUDY AREAS

### *URBAN DESIGN*

#### *Topography and Natural Features*

Both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario would replace a flat vacant lot with a high rise building. As noted above there are no natural features to be affected.

#### *Street Pattern, Street Hierarchy and Block Form*

Both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario would be constructed on an existing block and would not entail any changes to street pattern and hierarchy, and block forms.



*Streetscape*

Both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario would alter the streetscape by replacing a flat, paved, fenced lot with a new modern building that would have active new uses at ground level on West 53rd and 54th Streets. Both would reinforce the streetwall on these streets, which is strong along the project block and most of the north side of West 54th Street, but less so along the south side of West 53rd Street west of the project site. The active ground-floor uses of both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario would be compatible with those on the north side of West 54th Street, where some of the buildings are commercial and some have ground-floor retail. Each also would comply with applicable streetwall regulations, which at this location require the maintenance of a consistent streetwall up to a height of 85 feet above the sidewalk.

*Building Uses, Bulk and Arrangements*

Both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario would replace a vacant lot with new active uses. The former would include museum, office and retail space, while the latter would contain museum, hotel (with restaurant), and residential uses. Both would create new bulk on the development site, although the Expanded Development Scenario, with a much taller building, would have a greater bulk. Both would occupy the project site without setbacks at ground level other than those for pedestrian circulation. All the uses contemplated are in keeping with uses currently found in the surrounding area.

As described above, on the north side of West 54th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, there are a number of smaller-scale (4- and 5-story), masonry-clad buildings in commercial and residential use, as well as the 9-story University Club, two 12-story brick apartment buildings, and the 36-story Warwick Hotel, and the 33-story 1350 Sixth Avenue building. The Previously Approved Project would be shorter than the Expanded Development Scenario and shorter than the taller buildings in the surrounding area. The Expanded Development Scenario building would be the tallest structure within the primary study area; however, there are already a number of tower structures this area, including on the north side of West 54th Street.

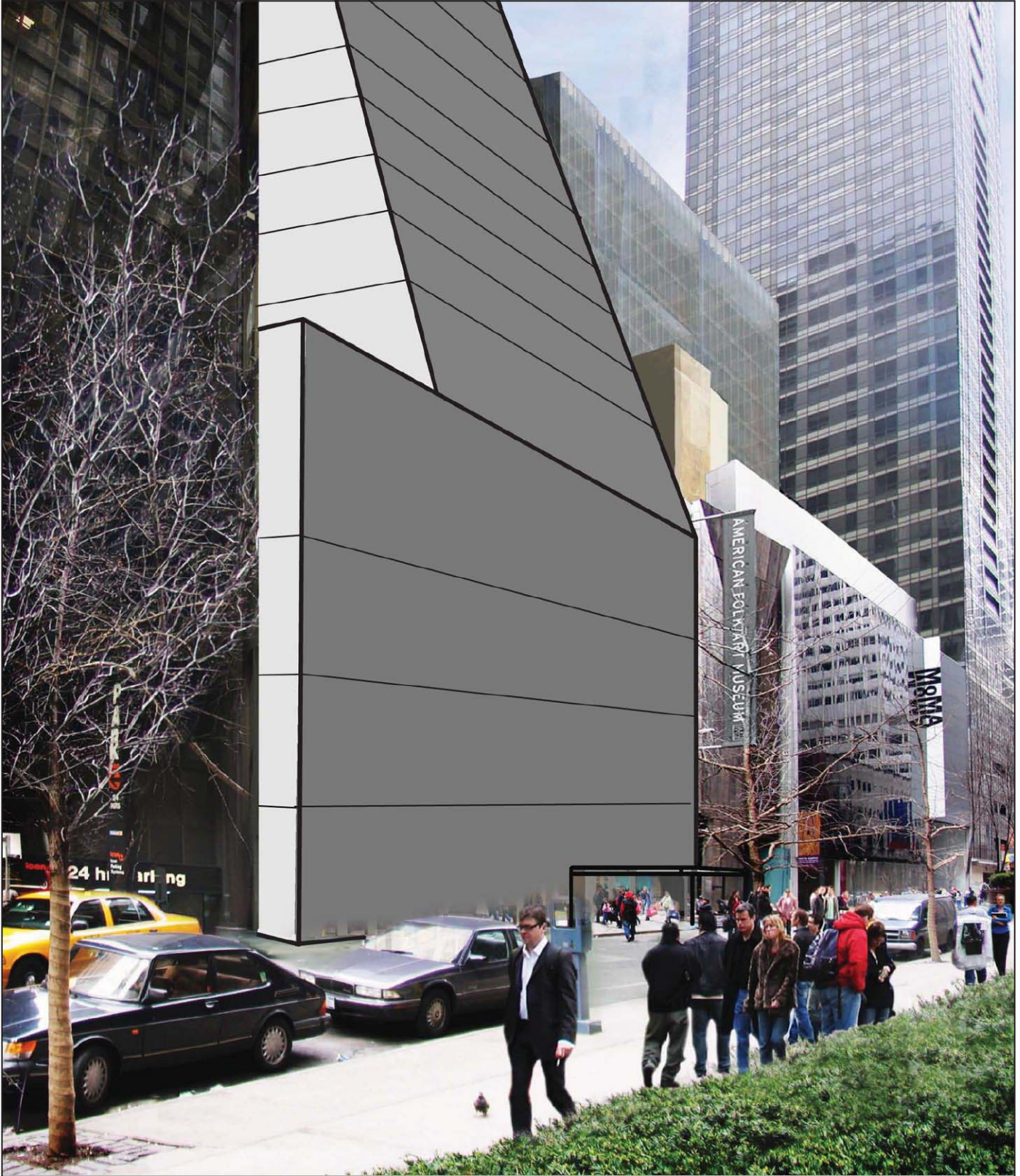
*VISUAL RESOURCES*

As described above, the Previously Approved Project would be shorter than the Expanded Development Scenario and shorter than the taller buildings in the surrounding area. It would not block views to any visual resources; nor would it be expected to be a visual resource itself. The Expanded Development Scenario building would be the tallest structure within the primary and secondary study areas; however, there are already a number of tower structures in both study areas. Tower structures in the 400-foot study area include the Museum Tower directly to the east (approximately 592 feet tall), the 40-story building directly to the west (approximately 496 feet tall), the landmarked CBS Building across West 53rd Street (approximately 498 feet tall), the New York Hilton Hotel across Sixth Avenue (approximately 492 feet tall), the Alliance Capital Building at 1345 Sixth Avenue (approximately 647 feet tall), and the Credit Lyonnais Building at 1301 Sixth Avenue (approximately 618 feet tall). Within the ¼-mile study area there are numerous tall buildings, as described above, that include the 697-foot-tall McGraw-Hill Building at 1221 Sixth Avenue; the 720-foot-tall General Motors Building at 761 Fifth Avenue; the 769-foot-tall Equitable Life Assurance Building at 789 Seventh Avenue; the 723-foot-tall Metropolitan Tower at 146 West 57th Street; the 754-foot-tall Exxon Building at 1251 Sixth Avenue; the 858-foot-tall Carnegie Hall Tower at 152 West 57th Street; the 810-foot-tall CitySpire Center at 150 West 56th Street; and the 850-foot-tall GE Building at 30 Rockefeller

Plaza. Some of these tall buildings have midblock locations. Further, the tall buildings within the primary and secondary study areas represent different massing configurations and building forms. Therefore, within this context, the height, size, and form of the Expanded Development Scenario building would be in keeping with the urban design of the primary and secondary study areas. In addition, the anticipated cladding materials of both the previously-approved building and the Expanded Development Scenario building—glass and steel—would be consistent with those of other modern structures in the area, including the immediately adjacent building at 1330 Sixth Avenue and the row of 492- to 754-foot-tall office buildings along the west side of Sixth Avenue between West 48th and West 55th Streets. The Expanded Development Scenario would be more slender in form than many of the taller buildings in the area, which have large commercial office floor plates. The Expanded Development Scenario would fully utilize the development site area and would be built to the lot lines of West 53rd and 54th Street, enhancing the existing streetwalls of those streets (see **Figures 8-32 and 8-33**).

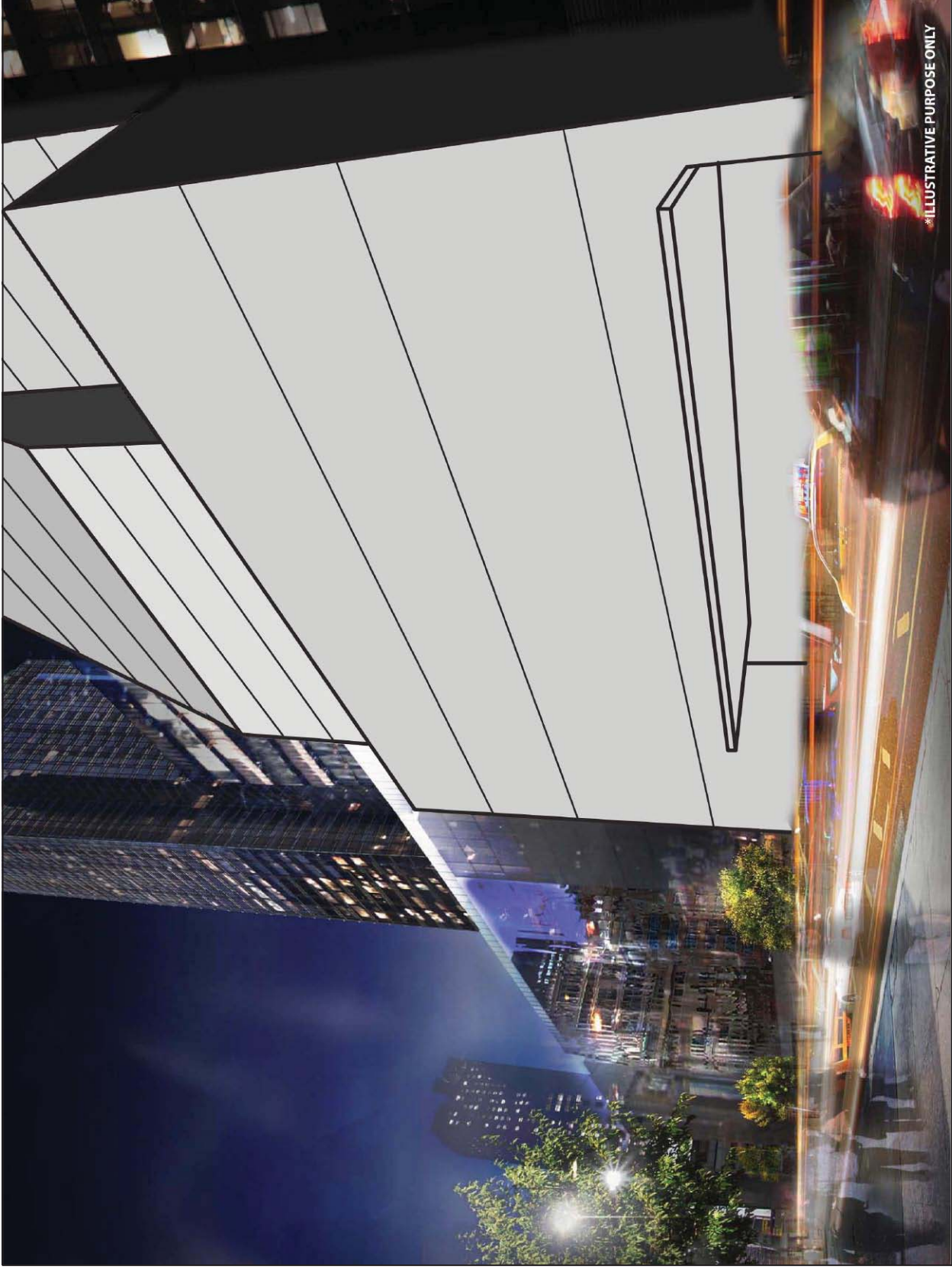
In the 400-foot study area, views closest to the development site would be altered by the Expanded Development Scenario, as the building would become a focal point of these views. Most notably, the Expanded Development Scenario building would become a prominent feature of views west on West 54th Street to the MoMA sculpture garden area. These views already include large-scale tower buildings, however, as do views of St. Thomas Church. The Expanded Development Scenario building also would be prominent in views from Sixth Avenue in the vicinity of West 53rd and 54th Streets and from the vicinity of the CBS Building plaza, where there are views through the midblock between West 52nd and 53rd Streets. From this area, the Expanded Development Scenario building would create a new backdrop to views of the CBS Building. With the anticipated cladding materials (glass and metal), this new backdrop would be a reflective counterpoint to the historic building.

In the ¼-mile study area, the Expanded Development Scenario building would be visible for long distances along 53rd and 54th Streets. However, only its tower would be visible in these view corridors, rather than the full extent of the building, and it would be viewed as part of the overall skyline of high-rise buildings in Midtown Manhattan. Further, from views east on 53rd Street, the intervening Museum Tower would partially obscure views of the Expanded Development Scenario building. It is likely that the Expanded Development Scenario building would be visible from the northern portion of Grand Army Plaza where the Museum Tower is visible, and from multiple locations in Central Park—most notably from the Heckscher Ballfields, the Sheep Meadow, the northern edge of the Lake, and the Great Lawn. From these locations within Central Park, the Expanded Development Scenario building would be one of many tall buildings composing the skyline of Midtown Manhattan, although it would be the tallest building in the skyline in these views. Located on an existing block and lot, neither the Expanded Development Scenario building nor the previously-approved building would obstruct any view corridors in the study area or any visual resources seen in those view corridors. As seen from Central Park, the Expanded Development Scenario building would likely partially obscure some views of the GE Building. However, these views are variable depending on the viewpoint in the park, and the GE Building is just one of many notable buildings that are part of the skyline.



For Illustrative Purposes Only

Street-Level Rendering of  
Expanded Development Scenario Building,  
West 53rd Street  
Figure 8-32



For Illustrative Purposes Only

Street-Level Rendering of Expanded Development Scenario Building, West 54th Street  
Figure 8-33

## D. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

With the proposed project would be an approximately 712,500 square foot (sf) mixed-use building with residential, hotel (with associated restaurant), and museum uses. The proposed building would rise to a height of approximately 1,250 feet and be nearly as tall as the Empire State Building. The building would have a unique faceted, tapered shape, rising to a decorative spire at the top and resulting in smaller floorplates at the higher levels of the building (see **Figures 8-34 through 8-36**). The building's structural frame would be expressed on its façade in a pattern of crisscrossing beams; this system was developed because of the narrowness of the development site and the height of the building (see **Figure 8-37**). The building would slope back on one side to yield views past the Museum Tower, and its northeast corner would be cut away to conform to zoning regulations. It is expected that the building would be clad with gray glass and aluminum mullions. The structural frame would be just behind the glass, and the intent of the design is that the transition between the glass skin and the structure would not be visible.

### DEVELOPMENT SITE

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

##### *Topography and Natural Features*

Similar to both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed project would alter the character of the development site. It would not longer be a flat, paved, fenced lot, but rather it would be a new high-rise building. However, there are no natural features on the existing site to be altered.

##### *Street Pattern, Street Hierarchy and Block Form*

Similar to the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed project would not alter the street pattern, street hierarchy, and block form as related to the development site.

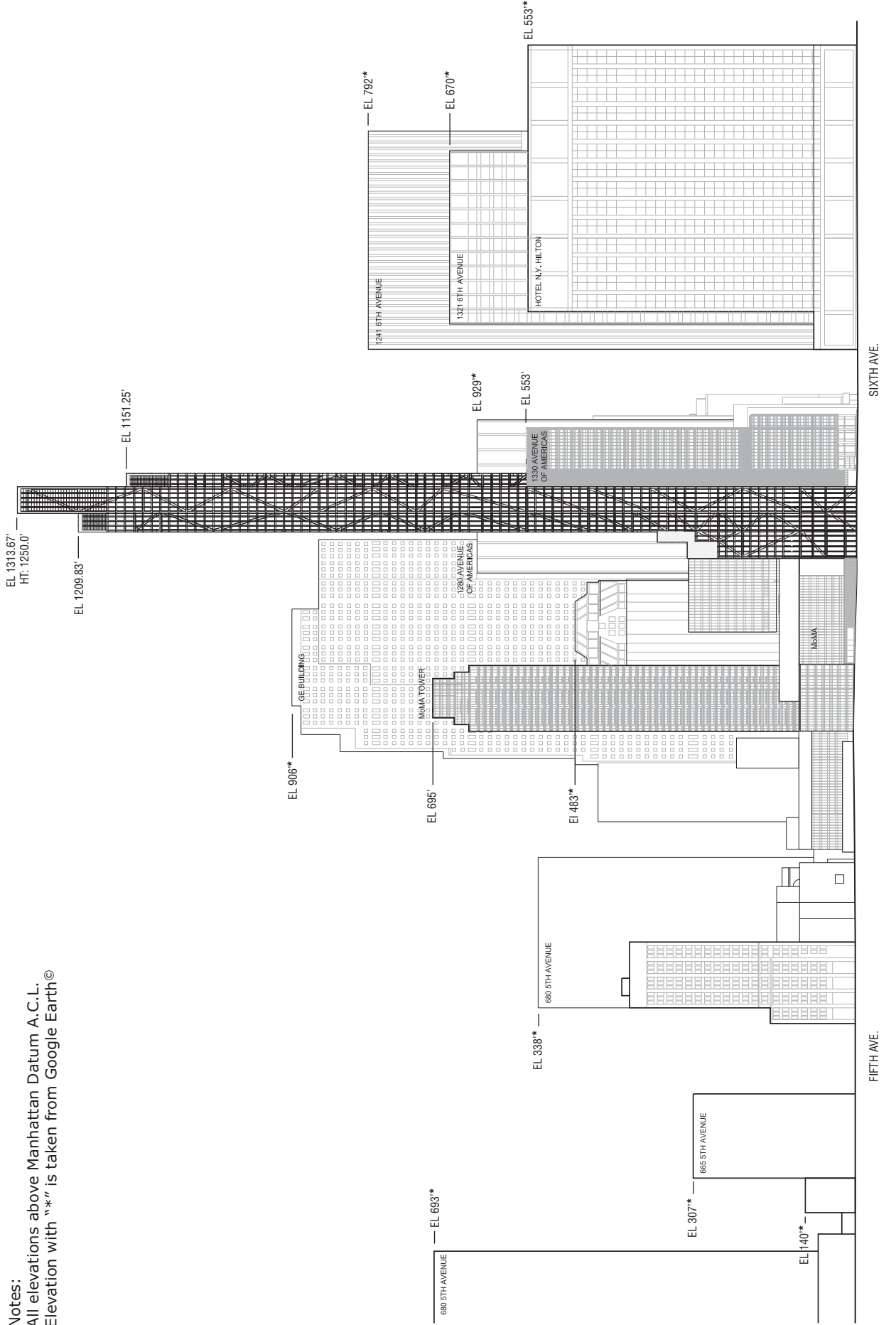
##### *Streetscape*

Similar to the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed project would alter the streetscape by replacing a flat, paved, fenced lot with a new modern building that would have active new uses at ground level on both West 53rd and 54th Streets. The Previously Approved Project, the Expanded Development Scenario, and the proposed project would reinforce the existing streetwalls of West 53rd and 54th Streets, and are expected to enliven those streets with additional pedestrian activity (see **Figures 8-38 and 8-39**). The building's structural frame would be expressed on the exterior of the building at street level, and would contribute to the building's anticipated active visual presence on West 53rd and 54th Streets.

##### *Building Uses, Bulk and Arrangements*

In comparison to the Previously Approved Project, the proposed project would alter the urban design of the development site by replacing a 285-foot-tall building with commercial office, retail, and museum uses with a 1,250-foot-tall tower with residential, hotel (with associated restaurant), and museum uses. Although the uses of the development site would be different with

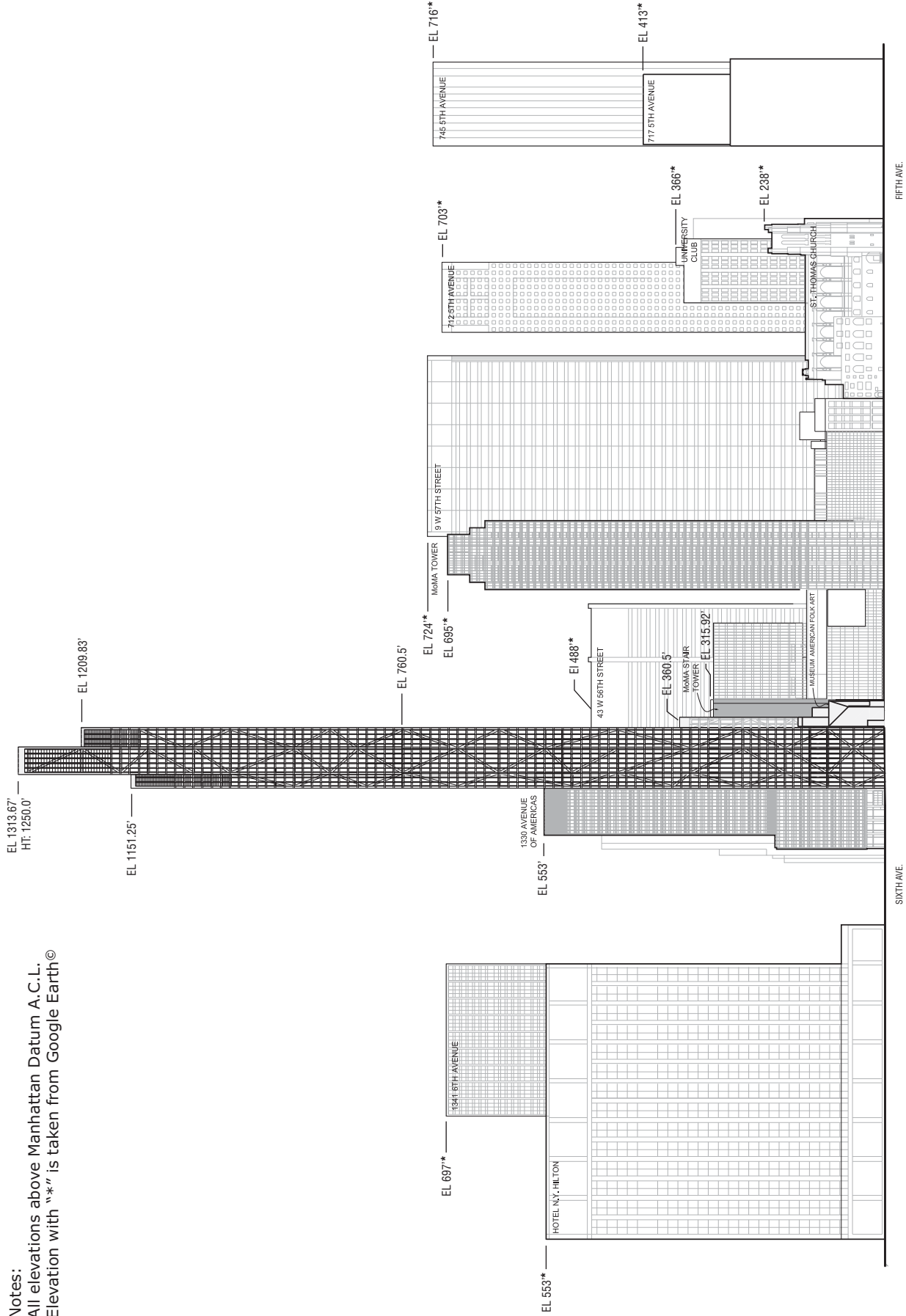
Notes:  
All elevations above Manhattan Datum A. C. L.  
Elevation with "\*" is taken from Google Earth©



Source: SLCE Architects

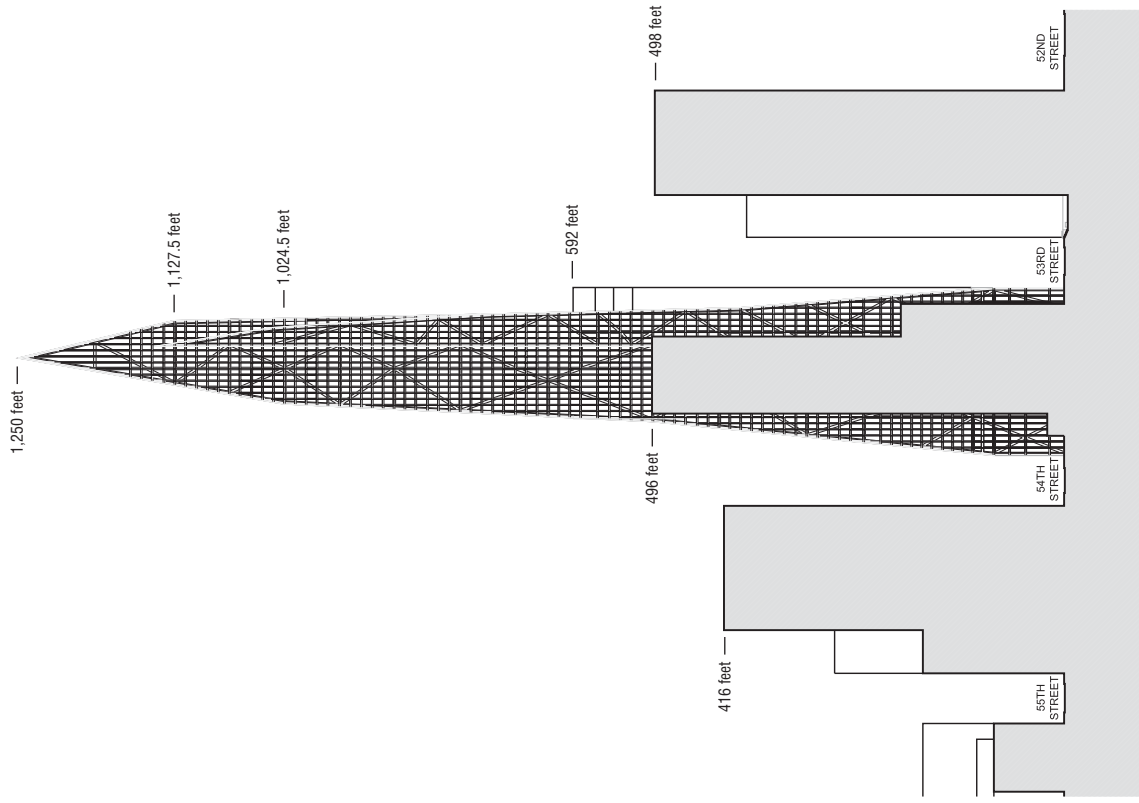
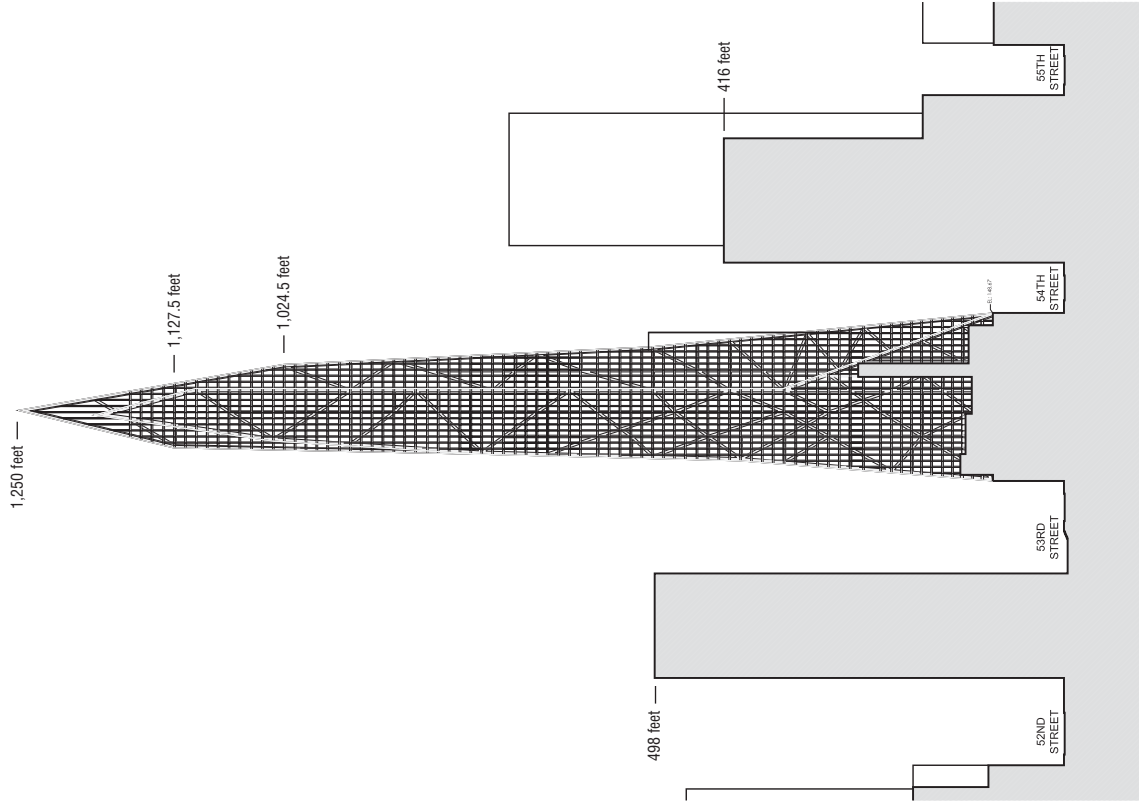
Proposed Project: North Elevation  
Figure 8-34

Notes:  
All elevations above Manhattan Datum A.C.L.  
Elevation with "\*" is taken from Google Earth©



Source: SLCE Architects

Proposed Project: South Elevation  
Figure 8-35



Building Materials shown for Illustrative Purposes Only

Proposed Project: East and West Elevations  
Figure 8-36



8.26.09



53 West 53rd Street

Illustrative Rendering of  
Proposed Building from West 53rd Street  
Figure 8-37



Illustrative Street-Level Rendering of Proposed Building,  
West 53rd Street  
Figure 8-38



the proposed project as compared to the Previously Approved Project, they would be the same as in the Expanded Development Scenario, and in addition they would be consistent with building uses that are prevalent in the surrounding area. The proposed building would be approximately 161 feet taller than the Expanded Development Scenario building, and would be much taller and larger than the previously-approved building.

While the proposed uses are similar to those in the Expanded Development Scenario's tower, which would set back at several stages but maintain a mostly rectangular configuration, the proposed building's tower would be faceted and would taper to a narrow point, as seen from the east and west. The building would slope back on one side to yield views past the Museum Tower, and its northeast corner would be cut away to conform to zoning regulations. As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the special permit to distribute floor area without regard to zoning district boundaries and to modify the alternative height and setback regulations, the requirements for pedestrian circulation space, and the rear yard equivalent requirements would allow a building design that moves floor area away from the MoMA Garden and the low-rise buildings on the north side of West 54th Street. The proposed tapering design, which would be enabled by the special permit, would open up adjacent views from the street to the sky, while lessening the tower's perceived height and bulk, particularly at the east and west elevations.

#### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

As noted above, there are no visual resources located on the development site, and there are no prominent or notable views from the development site to surrounding visual resources. The development site is not open to the public, and there are no public views from it. Therefore, similar to both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed project would not have any adverse impacts to on-site visual resources or views from the development site to visual resources.

### **PROJECT/TRANSFER SITES AND 400-FOOT STUDY AREA**

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

##### *Topography and Natural Features*

The proposed project would not affect topography or natural features on the project site or transfer site or in the 400-foot study area. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts to these urban design features as a result of the proposed project.

##### *Street Pattern, Street Hierarchy, and Block Form*

As with both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed project would be constructed on an existing block and would not alter the street patterns, street hierarchy, or block form in the study area. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts to these urban design features as a result of the proposed project.

##### *Streetscape*

The proposed actions would allow the modification of pedestrian circulation space requirements, which would accommodate the unique constraints of this site and design of this building. The proposed project, like both the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario, would enhance the streetwalls along West 53rd and 54th Streets on the project site and

in the 400-foot-study area by replacing a vacant lot with a new structure that is expected to enliven the study area with increased pedestrian activity. The proposed project, like the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario, would comply with applicable streetwall regulations, which at this location require the maintenance of a consistent streetwall up to a height of 85 feet above the sidewalk. The active ground-floor uses of the proposed project, like the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario, would be compatible with those on the north side of West 54th Street, where some of the buildings are commercial and some have ground-floor retail. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts to the streetscape of the 400-foot study area as a result of the proposed project.

*Building Uses, Bulk, and Arrangements*

As with the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed project would add a new building to the development site containing residential, hotel (including a restaurant), and museum uses that would be consistent with the variety of building uses in the study area. However, the other taller buildings in the area generally house commercial uses and have much larger floor plates considered more suitable for modern office buildings. The Previously Approved Project, the Expanded Development Scenario, and the proposed project all would fully utilize the project site area, like the majority of buildings in the study area. As discussed above, the proposed building would be 161 feet taller than the Expanded Development Scenario building and would be considerably taller than the previously-approved building. The proposed building, like the Expanded Development Scenario building would be the tallest structure within the primary study area; however, there are already a number of tower structures this area, including on the north side of West 54th Street, which also includes low-scale structures. The nearest buildings of a similar height—the Empire State Building and the Bank of America tower—are beyond even the secondary study area. These buildings are not located in the midblock; however, it should be noted that in comparison to the buildings, the proposed building (as well as the previously-approved building and the Expanded Development Scenario building) would occupy a much smaller floorplate and thus would have a substantially smaller overall bulk. It should also be noted that the development site is not a typical “midblock” location because it is located very close to Sixth Avenue, with approximately 43 percent of its total lot area located in the zoning district along Sixth Avenue, which allows for larger (higher) development. Furthermore, a number of tall buildings in the 400-foot study area were identified above: the Museum Tower directly to the east (approximately 592 feet tall), the 40-story building directly to the west (approximately 496 feet tall), the landmarked CBS Building across West 53rd Street (approximately 498 feet tall), and the New York Hilton Hotel across Sixth Avenue (approximately 492 feet tall), and within the context of these other tower structures in the study area, the height and size of the proposed tower structure would not be readily apparent, particularly at street level due to intervening buildings. The proposed building’s tapering would lessen the tower’s perceived height and bulk, particularly at the east and west elevations. The proposed building’s anticipated cladding materials—glass and aluminum—would be consistent with those of the previously-approved building and the Expanded Development Scenario building, as well as of other modern structures in the area. As part of the Restrictive Declaration, certain design elements, including cladding materials, will be required to be as shown on the ULURP drawings. The building’s design, while modern, would not adversely affect the diverse mix of styles represented in this area of the city.

In regard to pedestrian wind conditions, the proposed building would be located in a densely developed area of midtown Manhattan containing a number of tall buildings. While the proposed

building would be taller than surrounding buildings, the additional height is not expected to result in pedestrian wind speeds that would be significantly different than wind speeds experienced in the project area with existing conditions or conditions in the Future Without the Proposed Project. Similarly, the shape of the building (including the faceted tower which would taper to a narrow point) would not be expected to result in pedestrian wind speeds in the project area that would be significantly different from existing conditions or conditions in the Future Without the Proposed Project. From a pedestrian wind perspective, the proposed building would not be expected to create any unusual wind currents at street level that do not currently exist. Overall, the pedestrian wind environment produced by the proposed building would not be expected to differ significantly from the current wind conditions at the project location.

Therefore, in comparison to either the Previously Approved Project or the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed project would not adversely affect the building uses, bulk, and arrangements in the study area.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

Views in the 400-foot study area closest to the development site would be altered by the proposed project, as the height of the proposed building would be more prominent in surrounding views than that of the previously-approved building. The tower in the Expanded Development Scenario also would be prominent in these views. Most notably, the proposed building would become an important feature of sidewalk-level views west on West 54th Street to the MoMA sculpture garden area and of sidewalk-level views east and west on the south side of West 53rd Street. It would be noticeable from Sixth Avenue in the vicinity of West 53rd and 54th Streets, especially due to the CBS Building being set back from Sixth Avenue, West 52nd and 53rd Streets. From this area, the proposed building, like the Expanded Development Scenario building, would create a new, reflective backdrop to views of the historic CBS Building. The proposed building, like the previously approved building and the Expanded Development Scenario building, would be visible from West 52nd Street over the CBS Building plaza. These views already include large-scale tower buildings, however, and the change in views between the Expanded Development Scenario and the proposed project would not be considerable. The proposed project would be much taller and more slender (having smaller floor plates) than the many large office buildings in the area. It would have a more unique and interesting form than the Expanded Development Scenario and many of the buildings in the study area. In comparison to either the Previously Approved Project or the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed building would not obstruct any views to visual resources in the 400-foot study area.

Overall, in comparison to either the Previously Approved Project or the Expanded Development Scenario, the proposed project would not result in any significant adverse impacts to urban design or visual resources in the 400-foot-study area.

## **SECONDARY STUDY AREA**

### *URBAN DESIGN*

#### *Topography and Natural Features*

The proposed project would not affect topography or natural features in the ¼-mile study area. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse impacts to these urban design features as a result of the proposed project.

*Street Pattern, Street Hierarchy, and Block Form*

The proposed project would not alter any street patterns, street hierarchies, or block forms of the ¼-mile study area. The proposed building would be constructed on an existing block and would therefore maintain these existing urban design features.

*Streetscape*

The proposed project would not have significant adverse impacts on the streetscape of the ¼-mile study area. As described above, the proposed project, like the Previously Approved Project and the Expanded Development Scenario, is expected to enliven the streetscape and positively affect this urban design feature of the 400-foot study area. Beyond that radius, the streetscape elements of the proposed project would not affect the streetscape within the ¼-mile study area.

*Building Uses, Bulk, and Arrangement*

The proposed project would not have significant adverse impacts on building uses, bulks, or arrangements within the ¼-mile study area. The proposed residential, hotel (with associated restaurant), and museum uses would be in keeping with the mixed-use character of the secondary study area and would be the same as in the Expanded Development Scenario, although these uses would be different from those of the Previously Approved Project. The proposed building would be 161 feet taller than the Expanded Development Scenario building and would be similar in arrangement, bulk, and height to many of the large office and residential buildings found throughout the study area, such as the 697-foot-tall McGraw-Hill Building at 1221 Sixth Avenue; the 720-foot-tall General Motors Building at 761 Fifth Avenue; the 769-foot-tall Equitable Life Assurance Building at 789 Seventh Avenue; the 723-foot-tall Metropolitan Tower at 146 West 57th Street; the 754-foot-tall Exxon Building at 1251 Sixth Avenue; the 858-foot-tall Carnegie Hall Tower at 152 West 57th Street; the 810-foot-tall CitySpire Center at 150 West 56th Street; and the 850-foot-tall GE Building at 30 Rockefeller Plaza. Some of these tall buildings have midblock locations. As noted above, the development site is not a typical “midblock” location because it is located very close to Sixth Avenue, with approximately 43 percent of its total lot area located in the zoning district along Sixth Avenue, which allows for larger (higher) development. Further, buildings within the ¼-mile study area exhibit a wide range of uses, bulks, forms, setbacks, and arrangements.

*VISUAL RESOURCES*

Within the ¼-mile study area, the proposed building, like the Expanded Development Scenario building, would be visible for long distances along 53rd and 54th Streets. In these views, it would be one of many tall buildings framing the view corridors and would be viewed as part of the overall skyline of high-rise buildings in Midtown Manhattan. Further, from views east on 53rd Street, the intervening Museum Tower would partially obscure views of the proposed building. From most other locations within the ¼-mile study area, the proposed building would be considerably less visible, or not visible at all, due to intervening buildings and distance, although the upper floors of the building could potentially be seen above shorter buildings, depending on the viewer’s location and the height and bulk of intervening buildings.

As with the Expanded Development Scenario building, it is likely that the proposed building would be visible from the northern portion of Grand Army Plaza. As described above, the existing Museum Tower is visible along the Fifth Avenue edge of the plaza north of 59th Street. Seen from this limited location within the plaza, the proposed building would appear in the background behind the 687-foot-tall Solow Building, which is adjacent to the Pulitzer Fountain

portion of Grand Army Plaza, and the 653-foot-tall building at 712 Fifth Avenue. It would also be one of a number of other tall buildings seen from Grand Army Plaza, including the 720-foot-tall General Motors Building and the 664-foot-tall Trump Tower.

Like the Expanded Development Scenario building, the proposed building would be visible from multiple locations in Central Park. From the northeastern edge of the Pond (located at the southeastern corner of the park) and from the higher ground just north of the Pond, the upper floors of the proposed building would be visible, as the top of the Museum Tower is visible. From this location, the proposed building would be a background structure, partially obscured by tall buildings on Central Park South, such as the 483-foot-tall Park Lane Hotel at 36 Central Park South, and by other tall buildings on the five blocks between Central Park South and West 54th Street. It would also be visible as a background element of the skyline from the north-south drive west of Wollman Rink. In this view, the proposed building would appear behind the gold-crowned Art Deco tower of the 428-foot-tall Trump Parc building at 106 Central Park South.

The proposed building, like the Expanded Development Scenario building, would be prominently visible from the Heckscher Ballfields, the Sheep Meadow, the northern edge of the Lake, and the Great Lawn. From these locations within Central Park, both the proposed building and the Expanded Development Scenario building would be one of many tall buildings composing the Midtown skyline, although either would be the tallest building in the skyline in these views. As seen from the Heckscher Ballfields, it would appear in the background of the 428-foot-tall Trump Parc building, the 456-foot-tall Hampshire House at 150 Central Park South, and the 450-foot-tall Essex House at 160 Central Park South, which is crowned by a large neon sign of the building name. The 720-foot-tall General Motors Building, the 723-foot-tall Metropolitan Towers, the 858-foot-tall Carnegie Hall Tower, and the 810-foot-tall CitySpire Center would also be present in these views. From the Sheep Meadow, the northern edge of the Lake, and the Great Lawn, the proposed building, like the Expanded Development Scenario building, would be part of a greater expanse of the Midtown skyline, because these park locations that are located farther north offer more expansive views than areas south of 65th Street. As seen from the Sheep Meadow, the Lake, and the Great Lawn, the proposed building would be the tallest building in the skyline, but it would be a more slender building than other prominent structures like the General Motors Building and the Solow Building (see **Figure 8-40**). The expansive views from these locations also include tall buildings located outside of the study area, and the views from the Great Lawn include the 915-foot-tall Citicorp Center on Lexington Avenue and East 53rd Street, the 806-foot-tall One Beacon Court building on Lexington Avenue at East 58th Street, the two 750-foot-tall towers of the TimeWarner Center at Columbus Circle, the 1,048-foot-tall (to the top of the spire) Chrysler Building, the 1,200-foot-tall (to the top of the spire) Bank of America Tower at One Bryant Park, and the 779-foot-tall One Worldwide Plaza one Eighth Avenue at West 49th Street. As described above, the spire of the Empire State Building is also somewhat visible from this vicinity, behind intervening buildings, as are other, more distant skyscrapers. As seen from locations to the south, the proposed building also would be part of a greater expanse of the Midtown skyline, but would be a more slender building than other prominent structures (see **Figure 8-41**).

Located on an existing block and lot, the proposed building, like the Expanded Development Scenario building, would not obstruct any view corridors in the study area or any visual resources seen in those view corridors. As seen from the Sheep Meadow, the Lake, and the Great Lawn in Central Park, the proposed building, like the Expanded Development Scenario building, would likely partially obscure some views of the GE Building. However, these views are variable depending on the viewpoint in the park, and the GE Building is just one of many





For Illustrative Purposes Only

View of the Proposed Building from the Central Park Lake  
Figure 8-40



**53 West 53rd Street**

---

notable buildings that are part of the skyline. Therefore, these partially obscured views would not result in significant adverse impacts.

Overall, the new addition to the skyline of the proposed building would not have any significant adverse impacts on views or visual resources. \*